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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GENup 2021-2022 Policy Celebration Press release

Sacramento, CA, 14 December 2022 — In October, Generation Up hosted a Zoom call celebration to congratulate and thank everyone for all the hard work that was put into our advocacy this year. We gathered to celebrate the 28 bills that we either wrote or co-sponsored that were signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom, and three more bills passed in the state budget. Six of our very own student-written GENup bills were also signed into law, three of which were featured by Governor Newsom as a way to exemplify and uplift student and youth voices in California.

We want to say a special thank you to our guests and speakers: California Secretary of State Dr. Shirley Weber, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, Assemblymember Steven Choi, Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, Noah Marty on behalf of Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Vincent Rasso as the Student Affairs Manager at the Campaign for College Opportunity, Board Chair for ProtectUS Crystal Strait, Former President of the California State Board of Education Dr. Michael Kirst, Senator Richard Pan, Senator Dave Cortese, and Senator Connie Leyva for being able to join us in our celebration and supporting us in our advocacy journey.

We first heard from Dr. Shirley Weber and Mr. Tony Thurmond. Regarding GENup's advocacy for young people, Thurmond stated, "You all really are showing the way that great things happen when we follow young people and listen to the voices of young people. I want to thank GENup too just for all the work that you did to help us get the ethnic studies graduation requirement passed in the state of California. We need it now more than ever at a time when people are telling us that we can't talk about race or the impacts of racism." GENup aims to focus on fighting for similar policy in the future, and has addressed these issues in our bill slate this year.

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair of Senate Education committee, spoke on the importance of youth being our future. "You'll be our leaders for many, many years so currently and in the future, and we want you to participate... It's going to make us better, it's going to make society better, and I'm just thrilled that we were able to do this." We are grateful that Senator Leyva worked closely

with us when advocating for SB 955, which allowed students to take excused absences from school to participate in civic engagement activities

We then addressed individual bills. This year, GENup's K-12 and Collegiate team worked on many key bills, including AB 2122, AB 1602, AB 1905, AB 2683, AB 1705, SB 1479, SB 997, SB 1184, and SB 955. Many GENup members spoke on these bills, including Executive Director Alvin Lee, Director of GENup Collegiate Kimberly Woo, Collegiate Director of Policy and Technology Matt Aini, Collegiate Director of Organizing Sanya Dhama, Collegiate Director of Policy George Ashford, Collegiate Chief of Staff Ally Chan, K-12 Chief Partnerships Officer Saanvi Arora, Former K-12 Policy Director Léo Corzo-Clark, K-12 Policy Director Sissi Zhang, and K-12 Chief Policy and Legislative Director Jennifer Tran.

The policy celebration was closed out by Tran, Arora, and Lee. Regarding the advocacy GENup has done over the past months, Arora states, "Our age doesn't determine whether or not we're affected by public policy. Just because most high school students can't vote does not mean that they're not a valid constituency. GENup is committed to creating the representation that high schoolers are currently lacking... all these bills represent the essence of what GENup is all about: incremental yet substantial changes that amplify young people in local, state, and federal civic dialogue."

If you are interested in watching or sharing a video of the celebration call, the recording can be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/F30HWeeRcxE>

We are excited to celebrate our policy wins, and aim to continue translating youth voice into effective policy, and advocating for important issues that concern students around the country.

The original October 26th release named AB 997, AB 190, and AB 2623 as three bills that passed this legislative cycle under GENup's policy slate. This version indicates the correct bill numbers: SB 997, AB1905, and AB2683.

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