

**Legislative Youth Advisory Council
123rd Legislature, 2nd Regular Session
Draft Meeting Summary for January 29th, 2008**

Tuesday, January 29th, 2007
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Room 220, Cross Office Building
Augusta, Maine

Youth Members and Legislative Members Present: Rep. David Farrington, Gorham; Rep. Roberta Muse, Fryeburg; Benjamin Goodman, Kennebunk; Ian Engdahl, Winthrop; Will Colan, Readfield; Meg Richardson, Kents Hill; Mary Beth Moyer, Lewiston; Maureen Quinn, Portland; Zoë Baker, Kennebunk; Alex Cornell du Houx, Brunswick.

Youth Members and Legislative Members Absent: Sen. Joseph Perry, Bangor; Sen. Paula Benoit, Phippsburg; Grace Wright, Brunswick; Hannah Stein, Portland; Brandon Mazer, Brunswick; Claire Howard, South Portland; Heather Pratt, Chelsea; Dave O'Heir, Waterville.

Staff and Others Present: Lauren Sterling, Maine Children's Cabinet Senior; Patrick Norton, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis; Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis.

1. Meeting Called to Order, Review of Agenda

Call to Order

LYAC Chair Representative David Farrington convened the first Legislative Youth Advisory Council meeting of 2008 at 10:40 a.m. by requesting introductions from members.

Brenna reviewed briefly, the purpose of this meeting: to review legislation proposed by LYAC in its 2007 report to the Legislature and other legislation being proposed this session that may be of interest to LYAC, and prepare for the Education Committee public hearings at 1:00 p.m.

2. LYAC 2008 Legislative Agenda

Council members were provided with a Bill Status Report containing a list of current bills, including LD 2130 and LD 2131, and their status (i.e. public hearing and work session dates, committee vote, latest floor action). Copies of the bills were also provided for each bill on the list. Brenna will be tracking and updating this report weekly for Committee members' reference throughout the Legislative Session. In reviewing the list of bills, Council members agreed to follow them individually as time allowed.

Brenna reviewed with Council members how to access bill status information using the Maine Legislature's website at <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/search.asp>.

Representative Farrington asked Committee members if they were planning on testifying at the public hearings for LYAC legislation (LD 2130, LD 2131). Benjamin Goodman and Will Colan stated they were planning to testify on both bills.

Members were notified that the public hearing for LD 2130 in the Legal and Veteran's Affairs Committee had been scheduled for Monday February 4th, 2008 at 1:00pm in Room 437 of the State House in Augusta.

3. Other LYAC Business

LYAC Meeting Schedule

The Council decided that it would like to meet several times while the Legislature is in session, but decided against scheduling a meeting around the public hearing for LD 2130. Instead, individual members agreed to come and testify at this public hearing on their own time. Will Colan also raised the point that many LYAC youth members would be leaving the area for college in August.

The Council scheduled its next meeting for Tuesday February 12th, 2008, with the understanding that work sessions for LD 2130 and LD 2131 may have already been scheduled by then. The Council agreed that subsequent meetings would be scheduled on the 12th.

Announcements

Council members were reminded of youth/adult training offered by the Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN) at different locations across the state in January, February and March. Information about this training and who to contact if interested was provided to Council members by email.

Brenna announced the resignation of youth member Hannah Lennett of Litchfield, who is currently attending Brown University and feels as though her distance from Augusta and her commitments there are prohibiting her from attending meetings responsibly. This leaves 2 vacancies (1 house-appointed and 1 senate-appointed) each for a youth member who is home-schooled.

The Office of Substance Abuse has issued a draft Maine School Substance Abuse Policy Guide for review and would like time on LYAC's agenda to present the draft and get feedback. The draft manual sites LYAC and its work on the issue of school substance abuse policy. OSA is also interested in the possibility of a LYAC endorsement should future legislation on this subject be proposed. Council members agreed this is closely related to its work on enforcing school substance abuse policies and expressed interest in learning more about the draft manuscript. Brenna agreed to email the draft to Council members to review prior to the next meeting.

4. LYAC Legislation

Youth Co-chair Ben Goodman presented LDs 2130 and 2131 to the Council and opened up discussion and opportunity for questions regarding the two proposed pieces of legislation. Regarding LD 2131's proposal to amend the LYAC statutes to allow LYAC

to meet more often if outside funding is secured, Representative Muse asked Council members what they had discussed at the last meeting about how those additional meetings would be used. Zoë Baker clarified that the Council's discussion focused on enable LYAC to meet and use the time if needed to fulfill the Council's statutory duties.

The Office of Program and Fiscal Review (OFPR) has issued fiscal notes of \$71,369 and \$15,580 for LDs 2130 and 2131, respectively. Council members were provided with copies of the fiscal notes on each bill. Several questions were raised about what the fiscal impacts of both bills might be on their outcomes. Council members agreed to contact OFPR for justification of fiscal impacts of each bill. Representative Farrington stressed the importance of LYAC recognizing the calculated costs of its proposed legislation in preparation for the public hearings and work sessions.

5. What to Expect in Committee

Representative Farrington reviewed with Council members the procedures and protocols for the Education Committee public hearing process. Council members spent some time to review the other two bills being heard by the Education Committee this afternoon, LD 2043, *An Act to Protect Student Athletes*, and LD 2114, *Resolve, Requiring the State to Use Valid Risk and Preventative Factors for Youth Programs*.

6. Adjournment

Representative Farrington adjourned the morning session of today's meeting with the expectation that the Council would re-convene at the Education Committee public hearing for LD 2131, Room 202 of the Cross Office Building.

7. LD 2131 Public Hearing

For the afternoon session of this meeting, Council members attended and participated in the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs public hearing for LD 2131, *An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council with Respect to Educational and Organizational Matters* at 1:00 p.m. in room 202 of the Cross Office Building, Augusta.

As the sponsor of LD 2131, Representative Muse introduced the bill to the Education Committee and provided background on the bill and rationale for how pieces of the bill evolved. Her presentation was followed by Representative Farrington's testimony in support of LD 2131. Representative Farrington focused on providing the Committee with some additional context for Section 4, which directs the Department of Education for develop, by rule, minimum standards for co-curricular honor contracts, a provision which represents a direct result of LYAC's support of the Committee's Ought-not-to-Pass vote on LD 1254, *An Act to Modify the Student Code of Conduct*, which it considered last session.

LYAC youth co-chair, Ben Goodman testified in support of LD 2131. He provided the Committee with a national picture of State Legislative youth councils, pointing out that Maine's Youth Council is the only one with maximum meeting restrictions. He expressed that it is the Council's intent with this provision to use the time as needed to

discuss pending legislation, prepare its biennial report to the Legislature and communicate with its youth constituents.

Deb Bicknell of the Maine Youth Action Network testified in support of LD 2131 with particular emphasis Section 1, the provision allowing LYAC to hold additional meetings conditional upon securing outside funding. Deb asked the Committee to consider, as an amendment to the proposed bill, requiring or directing LYAC to dedicating some or all of these additional meetings to strategic planning and the development of a model that would sustain LYAC over time and membership turnover. Deb also raised concerns about restrictions and limitations the public access requirement for legislative bodies has created for LYAC and asked the Committee to consider exempting LYAC, or some of its meetings from the freedom of access laws to allow the Council more flexibility in meeting and reaching out to its constituents.

LYAC Member, Will Colan also testified in support of LD 2131. Will's testimony focused on the Council's involvement in LD 1254, An Act to Modify the Student Code of Conduct, considered and voted Ought-Not-To-Pass by the Education Committee in the First Regular Session. Will highlighted Section 4 of the bill, which reflects the Council's findings with respect to their discussion around LD 1254 and the Council's effort to balance student privacy and school safety with providing for a more consistent manner in which schools might use co curricular honor contracts.

Dick Durost, Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association (MPA) testified neither for nor against LD 2131. Focusing much of his testimony on Section's 3 and 4 of the bill, Mr. Durost expressed support for the concept of Section 3, which proposed to amend 20-A MRSA §1001, sub-§15 to provide schools with the option to include provisions allowing for the use of a district wide co curricular honor contract in their student codes of conduct. On behalf of the MPA Mr. Durost expressed concern with the permissive aspect of Section 4, and stated his belief that school districts already have standards for co curricular contracts in place. He concluded with his belief that the setting of minimum requirements in this area should be determined by the wishes of the local community.

Lastly, David Stockford of the Department of Education, a frequent guest of LYAC meetings also testified in support of LD 2131 and offered any assistance needed for work session.

There was no testimony presented in opposition of LD 2131.

Senator Bowman closed the public hearing for LD 2131 at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis