



True Up Youth Take Part in Children’s Advocacy Day at the Capitol

Several True Up youth were able to get an up-close look at politics in action and meet with key lawmakers during Children’s Advocacy Day at the Capitol. Held on February 5, this marked the 11th year for the event, which attracts hundreds of people from across Kentucky to Frankfort to have their voices heard on issues affecting children.

Advocates turned out in force to rally on behalf of children’s issues and ask lawmakers to invest in the youngest citizens of the Commonwealth. Nearly 20 True Up youth, ages 16-20, took part in the day of advocacy. They were joined by social workers, teachers, parents, judges, public health experts, doctors and other youth.

The crowd filled the Capitol Rotunda and heard from speakers who are passionate about issues affecting youth in Kentucky. 20-year old Joseph B., a member of the True Up Youth Advisory Council (YAC), was honored to be one of the speakers at the rally. Joseph, a foster care youth, recently completed course work at Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC) to become a certified nursing assistant. He told the crowd he was there to stand up for children in Kentucky.

Joseph was also grateful to be able to meet one-on-one with Representative Tom Burch, chairman of the House Health and Welfare Committee. Joseph told Rep. Burch he thought a review of State Agency Schools should be conducted to make sure best practices and college readiness were part of the curriculum. Joseph also urged Burch to support gay marriage and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or questioning (LGBTQ) issues. Burch was supportive of all measures.



Representative Tom Burch meets with True Up YAC member Joseph B. and True Up Director of Program Operations Nikki Thornton.

True Up youth were in the midst of the legislative action as they attended sessions of the Kentucky Senate and House of Representatives. Representative Joni Jenkins, the program



Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes meets with True Up youth, answering their questions and encouraging them to stay engaged.

director of True Up 4.0 at JCTC, recognized and introduced the True Up youth during the House session. True Up 4.0 is an advocate for foster care alumni on the JCTC campus.

During their visit to Frankfort, the True Up youth also had the opportunity to meet with Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes. She described her duties as the Commonwealth's Chief Election Officer and the chief advocate for civic engagement. During the meeting, the True Up youth introduced themselves and asked several questions of Grimes. She encouraged the group to stay involved, saying Kentucky is at its best when everyone is engaged.

True Up youth have identified housing, transportation and employment as the top issues affecting them.

Children's Advocacy Day at the Capitol began in 2004 as an effort to unite advocates from across Kentucky to raise their voices on behalf of children's safety, health, education and economic well-being. Those who attend the annual event have a common goal – making Kentucky kids a priority.