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Back at the Capitol -- Queer Youth Fighting for Quality Education

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GSA Network students were back at the Capitol just 3 weeks after Queer Youth Advocacy Day 2010 to put to usetheir legislative advocacy skills.

They arrived in the Capitol on Tuesday, May 11 ready to advocate with other youth involved in the 25 organizations that are members of the Campaign for Quality Education (CQE). GSA Network has been working with the Campaign for Quality Education during the last 2 years, becoming more engaged in improving public school education for all California's students by focusing on fair funding and providing qualified teachers, safe schools, and classes that lead to college and careers.

Youth from across the state came to give legislators and the Governor the Campaign for Quality Education report card on education during the last 10 years. One of the goals was to point out that California is failing our students and has been "Missing in Action" on education. One of the key things we talked about was the fact that during the last 10 years, as California's student

population has become more diverse (students of color now make up 70% of the student population), the state has continued to decrease education funding during that same time period.

Additionally, students urged legislators to support three bills, including one that students lobbied for at Queer Youth Advocacy Day 2010:

? The California Educational Opportunity Index (AB 2273), which would create an index system in California schools that will make it easier to see and compare schools on the opportunities a school provides, not just how the students perform on standardized tests

? AB 2335, a bill that would require the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to make recommendations to change the way school districts account for funding so that there would be more accountability and transparency in how schools spend money that they are given; and

? AB 2492, which would change the way commercial properies are taxed when there is a change of ownership, creating more revenue to go to public programs and services including education.

Isaiah Baiseri, one of the GSA Network youth who was a leader at QYAD 2010 and joined us on Tuesday said, "For me, attending the CQE event was really a great way to connect the skills I've previously learned to issues beyond those facing GSAs. It was fantastic knowing I could help with other issues affecting teens in California as a whole."

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