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Javi goes to Washington: Mr. President, Will You Make It Better?

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It?s been a high-powered week for LGBT youth. The White House held a two-day LGBT Youth Summit, the first of its kind. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan issued a ?Dear Colleague? letter affirming official support for Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in schools and colleges. And GSA Network youth leader Javi Pinedo shook President Obama?s hand and asked him, face to face, to Make It Better. Twice.

Javi, a senior at Merrill F. West High School, was one of ten youth invited to meet President Obama and his senior staff. Speaking to Kalpen Modi, Valerie Jarrett, Nancy Ann DeParle, Zakiya Smith, Macon Phillips, Jon Carson, and the President, Javi shared that he nearly didn?t get to walk in his high school?s graduation ceremony ? all because of a discriminatory school policy against gender nonconforming youth.

The youth were invited to share the stories and issues that most concerned them following May?s ?100 Youth Roundtables [1]? initiative (you can read more about GSA Network?s roundtable here [2]). Representing GSA Network, Javi pointed to laws currently in the California legislature (the Gender Nondiscrimination Act [3], Seth?s Law [4], and the FAIR Education Act [5]) as models for federal action.

?LGBTQ youth need to know they have support and need to have better ways to access that support,? Javi said. ?Meeting President Obama and seeing officials? response to my story and issues reaffirmed for me that youth do have a voice and CAN make it better.?

Most people reading this don?t have the President?s ear, but you do have a voice. Make a video [6]. Write a letter [7]. Call up the White House and reinforce Javi?s message, or add to it with some of the great suggestions from commenters on our Facebook page [8], like advocating for the national Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA).

Use your voice to make it better.

Cross-posted from Make It Better Project [9]

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[1] http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/03/09/president-obama-announces-100-youth-roundtables
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