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Teenagers file Amicus Curiae Brief with Texas Supreme Court

HISD Student Congress represents 200,000 Houston students

Yesterday morning, a group of students in the Houston ISD Student Congress filed an amicus curiae brief with the Texas Supreme Court, encouraging the justices to side with 600 school districts who sued the state for unconstitutionally and inadequately funding public education. The court heard oral arguments on September 1st.

The 35 page brief is completely student written, and puts a human face to a case absorbed in dry legal facts. The students provided four clear objectives on what schools need to do to prepare Texas children for the 21st century: decrease class sizes, improve teacher quality, enhance enrichment programs, and create stronger college and career readiness programs.

“The State’s lawyers imply that money won’t solve anything, but we’ve explained exactly what schools could do with more funding,” said Zaakir Tameez, the Founding Speaker of the Student Congress.

The amicus curiae brief uses school case studies, personal stories, and a student perspective to emphasize what money can do. Current Speaker of the Student Congress Amy Fan stated, “Students are more than nameless, faceless, numbers - when schools lose funding it has a direct impact on our educations and futures. We may be young, but that’s precisely what makes this brief genuine and accurate.”

As to why their brief stands out from all the others, Mr. Tameez explained: “while many of the lawyers attempted to provide a small window into what it’s like to be in a classroom, we’ve walked through the door. We experience school every day.”

Mr. Tameez and Ms. Fan are acknowledged on the Court website here: search.txcourts.gov/Case.aspx?cn=14-0776. The brief can be found here: bit.ly/1g8oEdE.

BACKGROUND:

The Houston ISD Student Congress is a student-run, student-led organization that serves as the voice of the 200,000+ students of HISD. The Student Congress has over 400 high school student members.

The Student Congress meets monthly at different high schools, hosts bi-monthly StuCon Radio on 90.1 KPFT Pacifica, and publishes the popular student-run blog DearHISD.org. On April 22nd, 100 members of the congress travelled to Austin to lobby for Rep. Jimmie Don Aycock’s HB 1759 school finance bill.

For more information, visit HISDStudentCongress.org or this Houston Chronicle article: bit.ly/1DvzpuA. Like them on Facebook.com/HISDStudentCongress. Follow them on Twitter at @HISDStuCon.