



# Girls' Day at the State House & Youth Policy Leadership Forum

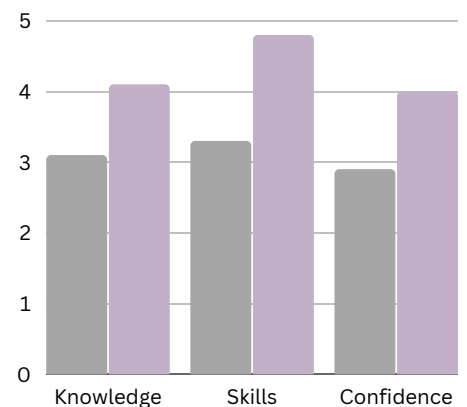
## 2023 REPORT

The MWL Education Fund opens the doors of the State House to people who care about gender equity. We work to help Mainers develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage in feminist, anti-oppression-based public policy advocacy and civic life. **We do this through programming focused on community building and community organizing in order to increase knowledge, skills, and opportunities for citizens to engage in public policy change.** At the center of this work are our two youth-serving programs: Girls Day at the State House, now in its 27th year, and the Youth Policy Leadership Forum, which completed its inaugural year this year.

### Girls' Day Outcomes



### YPL Outcomes



*"As a result of YPL I will look into bills surrounding issues that I care about."*

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## Program Outcomes

This year's program not only expanded to more participants from different age levels, as well as learning over a longer period of time and in greater detail, but the program also expanded in its commitment to gender equity and the current realities of how young people identify, choose to exercise their autonomy, and believe in their ability to be part of civic life regardless of expression, age, sexuality, and gender identity. **As the young participants convened over the course of the program to gain tools and understanding of procedures in policy, they also articulated their passion for specific issues, life experiences and observations, and goals for action to make the changes they hoped to see in the world.**

Not only was this program profoundly life-changing and powerful for the participants, but it struck people both ways - the participants realized their power as much as our volunteer legislators, lobbyists, and other change-makers, like the Maine Secretary of State, realized how strong the voices of youth are in Maine. **We found that not only did students feel empowered by being able to connect with each other, but many were surprised and heartened to interact with legislators from both sides of the aisle.** We were so honored to have a role in bringing this programming to youth in Maine.

Goal	Measure	Pre-test	Post-test	Percent Change
We will increase the understanding of the Legislative process in Maine among middle and high-school students.	<i>I understand how laws and policies are made in Maine.</i>	Girls Day 2.453	Girls Day 3.519	<b>43.46</b>
		YPL 3.1	YP 4.1	<b>32.26</b>
We will increase participants' skills and confidence to engage in the process to create change.	<i>I know how to help change policies, laws, and systems in my own community, in Maine, or in the world.</i>	Girls Day 2.328	Girls Day 3.444	<b>47.94</b>
		YPL 3.3	YPL 4.8	<b>45.45</b>
	<i>I feel confident that I could help change policies, laws, and systems in my own community, in Maine, or in the world.</i>	Girls Day 2.750	Girls Day 3.000	<b>9.09</b>
		YPL 2.9	YPL 4	<b>37.93</b>

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## Participant Feedback:

### [These programs] made me think....

- *About the world around me and the issues I care about*
- *How we can make systems of change more accessible to everyone*
- *It made me think about how my own school seems to struggle with safety and because of that, it makes me want to change it. I also wonder if at my school they would even hear me out about the things I would like to change.*
- *I am able to participate in my government and actually make good changes to it.*
- *YPL made me think and wonder what change I can make in Maine. I notice issues within my community and state and want to be able to make a change. YPL made me brainstorm and think what ways I can make change. It also made me wonder when I can provide testimony for public hearings. I was able to learn the methods that I can use to make change and share my voice. YPL made me think when am I going to do this.*



These programs were made possible through the generous support of the Abbagadasset Foundation, Sara Gideon, & the Seth Sprague Foundation.

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## [These programs] made me feel...

- *Made me feel connected with others, educated, and interested to learn more*
- *It made me feel more confident in my views of government and how I feel about different policies and laws.*
- *It motivated me to make change/encourage others to do the same*
- *It made me feel so grateful that I got the chance to talk to so many amazing women/individuals.*
- *Understood, empowered, validated*
- *YPL made me feel supported and seen. When I opened the I noticed many youth around the state that had similar ideas and fears that I had. They all gave their own time to participate in this, just like I did. It was inspiring to see so many individuals who want to make change, just like myself.*
- *Like there were others my age who cared about the same issues*

These programs were made possible through the generous support of Spectrum Communications, the Law Offices of Joe Bornstein, Maine Education Association, Berry Dunn, Town Faire Tire, and Saco & Biddeford Savings Bank.

## Now I will....

- *Take action on the opportunity to testify and reach out more in my government.*
- *I will continue to learn about our public education system and how to reform it!*
- *speak out about my opinions and why we should work to make change.*
- *Join more protests and educate myself further on what is happening in our state/country/world!*
- *Make sure to know my representatives when I move to a new state for college, and be able to contact them for issues I feel strongly about.*
- *I now have the tools to track bills and understand where they are in legislative process. This means that I can provide testimony for things I feel strongly about.*

