

Engaging Youth Leaders in Active Citizenship



BY THE NUMBERS

- 107 Youth, 13 Adult Partners from 56 counties across North Carolina
- 92% reported a better understanding of state government
- 88% were motivated to get more involved in leadership roles
- 71% now aspire to elected office
- 70% plan to contribute to community awareness
- 84% indicated a better understanding of how organizations work together
- 81% felt "I could make a difference"
- 100% met with an elected official

4-H teens from across North Carolina brought youth issues to the forefront during the 2006 "4-H Citizenship North Carolina Focus: A Capital Experience" in the Capital City, June 11-13.

More than 100 youth leaders participated in discussions of local and state issues, learned about all three branches of state government, attended a live staging of NC Spin, and met with North Carolina legislators.

The highlight of the conference occurred on Tuesday morning, June 13, as youth debated their own bill on the Senate floor, with the help of Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight. Based on their priority issues, youth drafted, debated, and ultimately passed an "Act To Appropriate Funds To The Establishment Of Youth Councils County-Wide Throughout North Carolina."

Participants from across the state engaged lawmakers, political commentators, and a variety of experts in lively discussions of issues that affect North Carolina's teens. Concerns included youth apathy, a lack of safe places to socialize, teen pregnancy, the threat of drugs and alcohol, the quality, funding, and administration of public education, and the lack of youth input in government decisions.

In response, 4-Hers created individual "Citizen Action Plan" to address specific needs in their communities over the next 12 months.

The event was made possible by the generous support of North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives and the North Carolina 4-H Foundation.





Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be relied upon with their own government.

~ Thomas Jefferson

