



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**TOM TORLAKSON**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October 1, 2012

Steve Willmont, President and CEO  
California YMCA Youth and Government  
2220 Capitol Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 96816

Dear President Willmont:

It is my pleasure to offer my support to the mission and vision of the California YMCA Model Legislature and Court Program, where participants have an outstanding opportunity to broaden their knowledge of the state Capitol and legislative process.

I understand that these middle and high school students come to Sacramento well-prepared after spending months discussing the many challenges facing California and then writing proposed legislation they take through the process. This practical experience enhances academic performance as well as helps prepare our young people for the real world.

And as you are well aware, the California *Education Code* has been amended through legislation that went into effect in January 2008 to add Youth & Government to the list of excused absences from schools. Since that time, attendance at an education conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization, such as the YMCA, is now considered a justifiable personal reason for which a student may receive an excused absence approved by the school principal.

You have my best wishes for an informative and successful program. May it be a special time of educational and personal growth for each and every one of your participants.

Sincerely,

Tom Torlakson