



February 19, 2026,

Governor Ron DeSantis,

On behalf of the North Port City Commission, we are writing to express our strong support for the continued funding and expansion of the Teen Court program.

Teen Court plays a vital role in our community by providing a constructive, educational alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system. By allowing youth to be held accountable by their peers, the program promotes responsibility, civic engagement, and respect for the law, while helping to prevent repeat offenses. This restorative approach not only benefits participating teens but also strengthens families and enhances public safety across our city.

The success of Teen Court lies in its ability to intervene early, redirect behavior, and empower young people with the tools they need to make better decisions. Participants gain firsthand experience with accountability, teamwork, and the justice processes that contribute positively to their personal development and future involvement as productive members of society.

A recent example of Teen Court's impact was its response to the issues at North Port High School. Teen Court stepped in quickly, offering support to school administrators by working



with students who were not criminally charged but may have been involved in instigating and/or filming the incident.

The North Port City Commission recognizes Teen Court as a cost-effective and impactful program that reduces the burden on the judicial system while achieving meaningful outcomes for at-risk youth. The program deserves continued support not only from the City of North Port and Sarasota County, but also from the State of Florida. Ensuring this program remains accessible and expanding its reach will allow it to serve even more young people in need of guidance and opportunity.

We respectfully urge your continued support of Teen Court and thank you for your commitment to programs that invest in prevention, rehabilitation, and the future of Florida's youth.

Sincerely,

Mayor Pete Emrich

On behalf of the City Commission