

Jack Klein's Civic Connections Helps High School Students Engage With Local Government

LIVINGSTON, NJ, UNITED STATES, August 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Standing in front of hundreds of students at [New Jersey Boys State](#), a selective civic leadership program where students simulate state government, Jack Klein saw how quickly an idea can gain momentum when young people know how to organize, advocate, and approach the right people for support. After being elected President of the Boys State Senate and finishing as the gubernatorial runner up out of 850 delegates, Klein returned to the civic initiative he had spent the last year building with a clearer sense of what it takes to help students turn ideas into action.

That initiative is Civic Connections, an advisory Klein created to help high school students connect with government officials and turn civic ideas into action. Through the organization, Klein works with students who want to improve their schools or communities, helping them refine their goals, build a strategy, and identify the local or state leaders who can help them take the next step.

"Most public servants are open to feedback from their constituents, regardless of age. The challenge is that youth advocates rarely know who to approach and how to get started," Klein shared. "Civic Connections brings student changemakers and local and state officials together to push forward important initiatives."

Civic Connections has already supported student-led efforts that led to one New Jersey public school system adding American Sign Language as an online course option and creating an ASL club, as well as connecting another student with school administrators to advance engineering proposals within their school ecosystem. Klein also worked with a group of young entrepreneurs



Jack Klein

and local legislators to build a government recognized Certificate of Social Entrepreneurship; and he is currently working with a teen leader seeking to shepherd unique mental health support into his state's middle and high schools.

To date, the nonprofit has worked on nine student initiatives whose long term impact will affect thousands.

Boys State, a program that mirrors state government, gave Klein the opportunity to hone his skills in navigating the civic process, the same process Civic Connections helps students navigate. As President of the Boys State Senate, he helped lead legislative proceedings and worked with other student representatives on policy proposals addressing issues such as clean energy, affordability, teacher pay, and labor pay. He also experienced the process of drafting and debating legislation which was compelling enough to make it to the actual Governor of New Jersey's desk.

Joseph McDonnell, Senior City Counselor at Boys State, recognized Klein's leadership throughout the program. "From the beginning of his week at Boys State, Jack embodied the very best qualities of a delegate at the program," McDonnell shared. "He demonstrated a unique ability both to rally hundreds of his peers from the stage with his charismatic affect, and to develop well reasoned policy proposals while serving as the President of the Senate within the legislature. Most importantly, Jack set the standard as a natural leader for his peers to look up to and follow."



Civic Connections Logo



Klein at New Jersey Boys State

While Boys State gave Klein a larger stage to test his leadership, Civic Connections remains the place where he is applying those lessons beyond the program. Built around the idea that young people deserve a seat at the table when decisions about their futures are being made, Civic Connections helps student leaders move from concept to policy with support from officials who can help champion their ideas. "Boys State lit a flame under me to drive forward Civic Connections," Klein shared. "Now, having been in the Boys State Senate, I have a brand new perspective of what it takes to pass laws, and with this knowledge, I am able to better advise and lead Civic Connections' clients."

As Civic Connections continues to grow, Klein hopes to expand the organization into a resource for high school students across the country who have ideas for improving their communities but may not know where to start. His goal is to remind students that civic involvement is not reserved for adults or elected officials, and doesn't have to wait until a certain age. It can begin with a student who has an idea, a plan, and the willingness to take action.

To support Klein and Civic Connections, visit civicconnections.org and share the organization with high school students interested in creating change in their communities. Students with an idea that should be heard can email jklein@civicconnections.org to get started.

About Jack Klein

Jack Klein is a student at Livingston High School in Livingston, New Jersey. He served as a student leader on Mikie Sherrill's campaign and was named an alternate for Boys Nation after his leadership at New Jersey Boys State. Klein is also President of Young Minds Big Ideas, an organization dedicated to helping fund children's entrepreneurial innovations and encouraging entrepreneurship among teens. Furthermore, Klein is an L2 Mandarin speaker who runs a Chinese after school program, reflecting his interest in government, business, and global communication.

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