

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 245
Student Voter Empowerment Act of 2020**

**House Ways and Means Committee
February 6, 2020
1:00 PM**

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Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 245 that seeks to expand election awareness and voting information to students in Maryland's colleges and universities. We support efforts that enhance citizen participation in the political process, and this legislation does just that by creating intention in how college students are engaged and made aware of how they can participate in elections on campus or through the absentee voting process.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Simply put, we want to help connect students to their civic responsibilities and opportunities, including through increased participation in the political and electoral process. We know such engagement will bring about a more informed citizenry and an expanded electorate. Considering the issues and challenges facing our state and country, it is imperative that we have as many people engaged, educated, and prepared to exercise their franchise to help determine the direction of our communities.

At a time when other states are debating how to make it harder to vote, Maryland should continue to lead the way to increase participation in our democracy. **We urge a favorable report of House Bill 245.**