

To the Chair, Madam Vice Chair, distinguished members of the committee and all those gathered, Good Morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Broderick "Rick" Pitts, of organizing black and the VOices Toward an Elected School-board. I am a voting resident of District 40 and a lifetime West Baltimore resident. I am writing in favor of SB0031

SB0031 is a major bridge in the divide in the gap between those that govern and those that are governed. Our young people are some of the best and brightest, not only in this state but also in this country. We allow them to drive cars, prepare our food and even count our money at restaurants. We allow them to choose where they want to go to school and how many loans they'd like to take in order to fulfill those goals, or which dangerous trade to participate in. However, at the same life milestones we deny them the opportunity to participate fully in School Board business. We have Highschool Juniors and Seniors and seniors with the chance to make sound decisions as directly impacted individuals yet they are denied that opportunity based on rules. This committee has before it, a bill that has been crafted with input from the Students, Families, Community, and even School Board Members. It will help to not only give voice to the chosen student commissioner, but to ALL city students grades 6-12 as they will finally be able to vote citywide.

Additionally, the commission to evaluate compensation for board commissioners is not imperative, but far overdue. We must find a way to compensate individuals for their time, so that they aren't sacrificing their own livelihoods for the service of themselves and their children. We must make this an opportunity to invite our communities into conversation and control of their communities' education.

I speak today in full Support of SB0031 as Written and urge this delegation to advance it favorably.

Thank you,

B. L. "Rick" Pitts