



SB031 Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Student Members and Task Force to Study Compensation and Student Members

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

EDUCATION, HEALTH, & ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT

Our names are Mara Babb, Subhashi Pradhan, Noor Chaudhry, and Julien Halleman, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in support of SB031 Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Student Members and Task Force to Study Compensation and Student Members. If passed, the bill will expand the voting rights of the student member and allow the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City to establish a system for middle and high school students to elect the student member of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

As the only district in the nation to have a [Student Member of the Board \(SMOB\)](#) with full voting rights, CRASC strongly supports the student member of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to have full autonomy to act as a representative of the student body. Student members are responsible for attending meetings, taking time off school, participating in committees, and representing all students in their district. They have the same expectations as all adult members of the Board of School Commissioners, however they do not have the same opportunity to vote on all issues like all other members. This bill would guarantee that SMOBs are seen as colleagues of the other members, and their opinions are seen as equally valuable.

Additionally, the student body of Baltimore City would have the opportunity to vote on a student that will represent their wants and needs, in regards to important county-wide issues. This will allow students to feel involved in local politics and encourage them to be civically engaged in the future. Some may say that students are uneducated voters leading to unqualified student members, however CRASC has been electing our student member with representative delegations every year since 1974. Since that time, we have seen determined leaders that successfully represent the interests of the students. Furthermore, the passing of this bill will still require the elected SMOB candidate to be appointed by the governor, ensuring that the elected student is in good standing to represent the student body.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* Opportunities for students to voice opinions on issues that directly affect students; (Plank 1, Clause F)
- *CRASC Supports...* Full voting rights for all Student Members on Boards of Education; (Plank 1, Clause B)
- *CRASC Supports...* Student participation in decision-making processes; (Plank 1, Clause G)
- *CRASC Supports...* A. Election of the Anne Arundel County Student Member of the Board of Education; (Plank 1, Clause A)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB031.

Respectfully Submitted,

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