

Testimony from Brissia Lopez- CAstro, Baltimore City Public School Student, Baltimore Resident

## SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Senate Finance Committee

My name is Brissia Lopez Castro, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of Somos (students organizing a multicultural and open society). I support [SB206].

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because... It would help students to be able to engage freely and communicate better with both peers and teachers. As a student I know It's easier to develop connections with others in smaller class sizes because you no longer have the pressure of what strangers are thinking of you, when students are in smaller groups there's more opportunities for participation and less social anxiety. Which can sometimes lead to limiting their learning because it's scarier to participate when classes are larger. It's also easier to approach teachers and students who you know and have a connection/relationship with, it's a lot easier to ask questions and address concerns when In smaller groups.

In my own classroom I often don't feel comfortable enough to ask questions because I don't feel like I know my teachers well enough and don't view them as approachable. I also feel like I don't get the attention necessary and lots of times my teachers don't even know how to pronounce my name by the end of the year showing just how hard it is for students to develop proper relationships with teachers if they aren't naturally outgoing.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on [SB0206] Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Brissia Lopez-Castro  
Organizer, Somos

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## Research:

- Brookings Institute 2011: "Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy"
  - Average class size is 15.3 (based on data compiled here from National Center for Education Statistics)
  - Largest impact for class size reduction from STAR was "the positive effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys."
  - "It appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have meaningful long-term effects on student achievement and perhaps on non-cognitive outcomes."
- NCTQ 2019: "<https://www.nctq.org/blog/A-sizable-opportunity:-thinking-strategically-about-class-size>"
  - "Of our sample of 124 large districts (which includes the 100 largest districts in the country and the largest district in each state), we find that almost all (82 percent) put strict limits on class sizes in at least some grades."
  - See table below for top nine districts from 2019 for average sizes by grade
  - Anne Arundel County Schools: goal for lower class size limits or goals for schools with more vulnerable student populations
- STAR, Tennessee 1980s
  - Compared classes of 15 to classes of 22, randomized groups (32% reduction)
  - Elementary students outperformed by .22 over four years, or equivalent of 3 months instruction
- SSRN, NY State: Effect of class size on teacher attrition
  - A decrease in class size from 23 to 20 students, under a district-wide policy, decreases the probability that a teacher leaves a school by 4.2 percentage points.
- 2009: NY Times: Class Size Around the World:  
<https://archive.nytimes.com/economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/11/class-size-around-the-world/>

## STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SUBMITTING YOUR TESTIMONY:

### Step 1: Finish Writing Your Testimony

SB00031/HB0153 - School Board Bill Toolkit:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W4KGXFcigPgVYZwtndqLY\\_RAGCa7hEKL9MeJriGzqdY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W4KGXFcigPgVYZwtndqLY_RAGCa7hEKL9MeJriGzqdY/edit?usp=sharing)

HB0085/SB0206 - Class Size Bill Toolkit:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aR9-ottSDoL18oEpObC4BhAvizrroiQLRLRqbEpLtCc/edit>

### Step 2: Sign-In or Make MyMGA Account

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/MyMGATracking/WitnessSignup>

### Step 3: Go to "Witness Sign Up" & look for your bill

Decide if you want to submit written, virtual oral, live oral, or "both" which is written and virtual or live oral. Select that option and then hit SAVE.

**Step 4: Wait for your testimony ZOOM link the morning of the hearing (if giving spoken testimony)**  
It will come from this email: no-reply@mlis.state.md.us

**Step 5: Watch MGA youtube channel**

Watch your hearing & jump on when your bill is called

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/YouTubeChannelInfo>

