

SB0204\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
02/04/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
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**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0204- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Public Schools - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0204, **Public Schools - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established**

If Maryland schools are to prepare students for the future as engaged citizens schools should be incentivized to promote and reward the students who have acquired and applied knowledge of civics. Students must be encouraged to learn that freedom also means responsibility and guided to recognize and make those citizen responsibilities a part of their future.

This bill promotes that goal by establishing the Maryland Civic Excellence Program in the State Department of Education; authorizing a local school system to participate in the Program to recognize students who meet criteria related to student proficiency in civics and civic literacy; and requiring the Department, no later than the 2027-2028 school year, to develop guidelines to assist participating local school systems.

The success of our democracy and society depends on civic education. It equips us with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to become informed citizens actively participating in our democratic process. Civic education helps us understand our rights and responsibilities as citizens, promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsible action. <sup>1</sup>

If our youth are the future, everything we can do to help them make that future happen with the knowledge and tools they need can secure that future for them and our counties, state, and nation.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0204.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://civicsforlife.org/the-importance-of-civic-education/>