



Maryland

Department of Service and Civic Innovation

WES MOORE, Governor
ARUNA MILLER, Lieutenant Governor
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SARAH FLAMMANG, *Deputy Secretary*

January 27th, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle Wilkins
Chair - Ways and Means Committee
Room 130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

The Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation requests a favorable report on House Bill 57 - "Public Schools - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established".

The development of the Maryland Civic Excellence Program within the State Department of Education is a necessary action to help provide the means to recognize and promote civic engagement within our Maryland schools. This program would empower schools to promote civic education while allowing the flexibility to design and implement civic learning initiatives that reflect the needs, strengths, and priorities of their own communities.

The Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation remains committed to promoting civic literacy and engagement throughout the State, and this program aligns with that mission. Service and civic engagement are nonpartisan strategies that can help us bridge community divides. By promoting these values through proposed programs such as the Maryland Civic Excellence Program, communities can help support young, service-minded leaders who foster unity within their local neighborhoods. The voluntary nature of the program allows both schools and individuals the flexibility to adjust the program to their specific community needs and strengths. This approach to civic engagement enables communities to better address their unique situations and ultimately makes the program more effective.

House Bill 57 and the development of the Maryland Civic Excellence Program are necessary steps to help promote civic engagement amongst young people in the State of Maryland. A civic seal of excellence helps incentivize program participation and can help cultivate leadership skills throughout young people who would not otherwise have taken advantage of such opportunities. A formal system of recognition helps drive participation and allows individuals to feel a sense of accomplishment upon completion.

Fostering civic engagement is a crucial tool to help solve some of our modern societal problems. The Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation respectfully urges a favorable report of House Bill 57 and strongly believes in the core mission of the program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Stephen Horman, Legislative Liaison, at stephen.horman@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,
Jonny Dorsey
Acting Secretary - Department of Service and Civic Innovation