

## **House Ways & Means Committee**

### **HB 57 Education – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established**

**Bill Hearing Date January 29, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Anisa Kalil and I am a high school student from Baltimore County. I support the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence because students who do meaningful civics projects deserve to be recognized for the time, effort, and leadership they put into improving their communities.

In my own experience, civic learning is most powerful when students are trusted with real responsibility. As a leader for the Maryland Civic Education Coalition's Youth Advisory Council, I've seen first hand the profound impact that civic engagement initiatives students run have on their communities. For example, the youth-led town hall we led this past spring was a state-wide webinar aiming to teach students across Maryland about the avenues they can take to advocate for themselves and their community. Through this experience, I learned that collective civic engagement is key to a more well-rounded and inviting community.

Many students care deeply about their communities but do not see clear pathways that connect civic engagement to school success or graduation. A Seal of Civic Excellence would help change that by showing students that service, participation, and leadership are valued and worth pursuing. A graduation seal matters because it shows that civic engagement is just as important as academic achievement, athletics, or career readiness.

This is the right time to create the Seal of Civic Excellence as we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Honoring students who live out those ideals today helps ensure that the next generation is ready to carry our nation forward.

*Thank you for considering my testimony.*