

[HB0057 \(SB0204\)](#): Public Schools - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established:  
Please VOTE to OPPOSE this bill **at this time**.

Dear Ways & Means and Education, Energy & the Environment Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write to **respectfully oppose HB 0057 / SB 0204 – Public Schools – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established, at this time**.

I want to be clear at the outset: **civic education is important**, and the goals of this program are thoughtful and well-intentioned. Helping students understand civic responsibility, government, and democratic participation is a worthy objective and one that I hope Maryland continues to support in the future.

However, **this is not the right moment to expand instructional mandates or programmatic expectations in our public schools**.

Across Maryland, students are struggling with **fundamental academic skills**. Reading proficiency, writing ability, math achievement, and science readiness remain pressing concerns. Teachers and schools are already stretched thin, working tirelessly to help students **catch up** in the core subjects that form the foundation for all future learning — including effective civic participation. Maryland's test scores for both ELA and Math are atrocious.

Before adding new statewide programs, we must first ensure that **every student can read fluently, write clearly, compute accurately, and understand basic scientific concepts**. Without these skills, even the most well-designed civic curriculum cannot be fully effective.

**HB 0057 /SB 0204** risks **diverting limited instructional time, resources, and attention** away from these urgent priorities. At a time when educators are being asked to do more with less, the state should be laser-focused on **strengthening core academic outcomes** and supporting teachers in that mission.

This is not a rejection of civic education — it is a call for **proper sequencing and prioritization**. Once Maryland's students are consistently meeting foundational academic benchmarks, programs like the Maryland Civic Excellence Program can be introduced with far greater impact and success.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue an **unfavorable vote on HB 0057/SB 0204 AT THIS TIME, with the intention of bringing this program back**

**when our students have been more successful with learning their core academics.**

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work on behalf of Maryland's students and educators.

Sincerely,  
Trudy Tibbals