



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB0057: Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established

Ways and Means Committee

Thursday, January 29th - 1:00 pm

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

It is essential for Maryland's youngest residents to understand how their government, federal, state, and local, works for them and how they can participate in shaping it. Our public schools should therefore make every possible effort to prioritize civic education and ensure that learning about democracy is not only rigorous, but hands-on and rewarding for students.

HB0057 would establish the Maryland Civic Excellence Program, a statewide initiative designed to strengthen civic education and encourage meaningful community involvement among public school students. The program does this by creating a clear, incentivized pathway that recognizes both individual student achievement and schoolwide participation.

Under this program, students would have the opportunity to earn the Seal of Civic Excellence by passing the government and civics assessment required for graduation in their school or district, earning strong grades in their social studies coursework, and completing verified service hours. Students who meet these requirements would receive formal recognition, including the seal placed on their transcript and high school diploma, along with a medal, cord, or similar distinction.

Schools would also be eligible for recognition. Any school in which at least half of the graduating class earns the seal could receive a citation from the Maryland State Department of Education. Participation in the program would be voluntary, and schools would retain flexibility to set their own standards, provided they meet the program's minimum requirements.

HB0057 offers Maryland students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of our democratic systems while actively engaging in their communities, without imposing additional costs on school budgets. It is a practical, low cost way to invest in lifelong civic participation.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB0057.