

SENATE BILL 204

F1

(6lr0716)

ENROLLED BILL

— Education, Energy, and the Environment/Ways and Means —

Introduced by Senators Kagan and Ready, Ready, Attar, Brooks, Carozza, Feldman, Ferguson, Gallion, Gile, Harris, Hester, Hettleman, King, Lewis Young, Love, McKay, Simonaire, Smith, Waldstreicher, A. Washington, M. Washington, Watson, and West

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this _____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.

President.

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Schools – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Civic Excellence Program ~~in the State~~
4 ~~Department of Education~~ for certain public high school students; requiring the State
5 Board of Education to establish the criteria and requirements for the Program in
6 regulation; *requiring that a certain capstone project be included in the Program;*
7 authorizing a local school system to participate in the Program to recognize ~~students~~
8 ~~who meet criteria related to student proficiency in civics and civic literacy~~ public
9 high school students for their civic readiness and civic engagement; and generally
10 relating to the Maryland Civic Excellence Program.

11 BY adding to

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.



1 Article – Education
 2 Section 7–137
 3 Annotated Code of Maryland
 4 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

5 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 6 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

7 **Article – Education**

8 **7–137.**

9 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE MARYLAND CIVIC
 10 EXCELLENCE PROGRAM.

11 (B) ~~(1)~~ THERE IS A MARYLAND CIVIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM ~~IN THE~~
 12 ~~DEPARTMENT~~ THAT RECOGNIZES THE CIVIC READINESS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
 13 OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE STATE.

14 ~~(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO RECOGNIZE STUDENTS~~
 15 ~~AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PROMOTE THE CIVIC READINESS AND CIVIC~~
 16 ~~ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE.~~

17 ~~(C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.~~

18 ~~(D)~~ (C) (1) NOT LATER THAN THE 2027–2028 SCHOOL YEAR, THE
 19 ~~DEPARTMENT~~ STATE BOARD, IN CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS AND
 20 STAKEHOLDERS, ~~SHALL DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARTICIPATING LOCAL~~
 21 ~~SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO DETERMINE STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN CIVICS AND CIVIC~~
 22 ~~LITERACY~~ ADOPT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH THE CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS
 23 FOR AWARDING A SEAL OF CIVIC EXCELLENCE TO A QUALIFIED STUDENT WHO
 24 ATTENDS A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.

25 (2) THE CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE BOARD SHALL
 26 INCLUDE A REQUIREMENT THAT, IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A SEAL OF CIVIC
 27 EXCELLENCE, A STUDENT MUST COMPLETE A CAPSTONE PROJECT THROUGH AN
 28 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY THAT IS FOCUSED ON CIVIC SERVICE IN STATE,
 29 COUNTY, OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

30 ~~(E)~~ (D) (1) ~~THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES ONLY TO A~~ A LOCAL SCHOOL
 31 SYSTEM ~~THAT PARTICIPATES~~ MAY CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.

1 (2) A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL
 2 SYSTEM SHALL UTILIZE THE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF
 3 THIS SECTION TO ESTABLISH:

4 ~~(I)~~ ~~A MARYLAND CIVIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS;~~

5 ~~(II)~~ ~~APPLICATION CRITERIA TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM;~~

6 ~~AND~~

7 ~~(III)~~ ~~CRITERIA FOR AWARDING A STUDENT THE SEAL OF CIVIC~~
 8 ~~EXCELLENCE~~ MAY NOT OPT OUT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

9 (3) IF A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
 10 PROGRAM, A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SHALL IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM, IN
 11 ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD, BY
 12 INCORPORATING A CIVIC SERVICE CAPSTONE PROJECT INTO AN EXTRACURRICULAR
 13 ACTIVITY AT THE SCHOOL THAT:

14 (I) IS AN EXISTING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY AT THE TIME
 15 THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM; OR

16 (II) IS A NEW EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY THAT IS SUPERVISED
 17 BY A PAID STAFF MEMBER.

18 ~~(F)~~ (E) A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT DETERMINES A
 19 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HAS FULFILLED THE CRITERIA UNDER THE
 20 PROGRAM MAY ESTABLISHED IN REGULATIONS ADOPTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
 21 SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION SHALL:

22 (1) AWARD THE STUDENT A SEAL OF CIVIC EXCELLENCE; AND

23 (2) RECOGNIZE THE AWARD BY AWARDING A CORD OR MEDAL OR BY
 24 ATTACHING OTHER INSIGNIA ON THE STUDENT'S HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

25 ~~(G)~~ (F) A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MAY COLLABORATE
 26 WITH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, OR INSTITUTIONS OF
 27 HIGHER EDUCATION TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

28 ~~(H)~~ (G) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2028, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER,
 29 EACH PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM SHALL SUBMIT TO THE DEPARTMENT
 30 A REPORT ON THE PROGRAM BASED ON THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED SCHOOL
 31 YEAR.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
2 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.