



Howard County Council

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District 1

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0753

Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

February 10, 2021

Dear Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee. We are writing today to express our **support for HB0753**, legislation introduced by Delegate Ebersole to protect the rights of students to peacefully demonstrate in schools.

In recent years, students across Maryland have organized and led peaceful demonstrations at school to protest gun violence, police brutality, and racism. While many of these demonstrations have been permitted in Maryland school districts, some students have faced threats of disciplinary action for exercising their right to speech and peaceful protest. This bill would ensure that all Maryland students are protected from disciplinary action if they choose to participate in peaceful, organized protests on school campuses.

We have met with several student leaders and activists in Howard County who have highlighted the importance of protecting this right for students in schools. As we continue to witness incredible leadership and courage from young people in our community who are standing up for social justice and change, this legislation makes important strides in protecting students' right to speech and peaceful demonstration.

Our school systems should be empowering students to be civically engaged and educating young people on how to use their agency for change. HB0753 will support those goals and support our students. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. We respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Liz Walsh
Councilmember, District 1

Christiana Rigby
Councilmember, District 3