

HB 192

I am writing to oppose HB 192 and I respectfully request you vote AGAINST this bill, which would increase voting abilities of the young and impressionable student member of the board (SMOB).

My children attend BCPS, and I am firmly against increasing the SMOB voting abilities to include items which would be a direct conflict of interest for a student, as well as not appropriate for a minor to weigh in on, such as budget items. People under the age of 18 do not have the right to vote. Also, with advanced age comes life experience that provides more multifaceted insight and wisdom when making decisions that the SMOB does not have.

SMOB only serves on the BOE for 1 year and is also a full-time student. Learning the details of a complicated \$2+ billion budget often takes more than 1 full year to completely understand. If you have never listened to a BCPS BOE Budget Committee meeting, I would recommend it. It is very detailed and complex and no one, regardless of age, would be able to master an understanding in 1 year in order to make a knowledgeable vote regarding a \$2 Billion budget.

A child's vote can be easily manipulated. Children look up to adults, especially adults in positions of power. Without experience and maturity, an individual is more likely to be influenced by others. It is a conflict of interest to have the SMOB vote on issues that directly impact his/her teachers or advisors that the student relies on for grades, letters of recommendation or career experiences.

The BCPS BOE Legislative and Gov. Relations Committee already voted against this, in addition when it was raised at a BCPS BOE meeting, it was voted down, with only 3 out of 12 members voting for it.

I strongly request for you to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time

Katie Kimball
District 7
Baltimore County