

MARYLAND STUDENT COALITION

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TESTIMONY

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 483 - Young Readers Programs - Establishment (Young Readers Program Expansion Act)

SPONSOR: Senator McCray, *Baltimore City (45)*

POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

Monday, January 17, 2022

SB 483: Favorable

The Maryland Student Coalition is an entirely student-led, advocacy group that serves to bring students together to promote education policy reform. Founded in 2020 as a vehicle for advocating for students' right to demonstrate, our scope has since expanded to include more educational advocacy initiatives. You can learn more at marylandstudents.org

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. We are writing in favor of Senate Bill 483.

Senate Bill (SB) 483 - Young Readers Programs - Establishment (Young Readers Program Expansion Act), will establish the Baltimore City Young Readers Program to mail free, and high-quality, books to children and establishing the Young Readers Matching Grant Program to provide matching grants to counties to support the establishment and operation of certain book-gifting services.

SB 483 takes necessary and important strides to increasing free access to literature for Maryland's youth. The US Department of Education (DOE) has determined that currently Baltimore City has an average annual circulation of 1-10 library materials per student. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) stated, in relation to the data provided by the DOE, that students who report having more books in their homes performed better academically while only 15% of those who only consumed 1-10 reading materials annually scored proficiently in 2015. This indicates increased access to reading materials bolsters literacy: an important benchmark of the efficacy of the Maryland education system.

It is the duty of the State of Maryland to support programs such as the Young Readers Program as a continued commitment to the educational progress and advancement of Maryland's students.

The Maryland Student Coalition supports the principles within the legislation and strongly encourages issuing a **favorable** report on SB 483.