



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 192 (Delegate Ebersole)  
Baltimore County Board of Education – Student Member – Voting  
FAVORABLE**

January 27, 2022

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of Strong Future Maryland, we write in strong support of House Bill 192. Strong Future Maryland works to advance bold, progressive policy changes to address systemic inequality and promote a sustainable, just and prosperous economic future for all Marylanders. We urge you to support this legislation as expanding youth political participation encourages collective efforts against long-term socio-economic crises that will affect current and future generations' stability, security, and sustainability. We urge you to support this legislation as this would increase the quality of local democratic governance and contribute to a dynamic and inclusive political process that represents the voice of all Marylanders.

This bill would expand the voting rights of the Student Member of the Board of Education bringing it in line with other jurisdictions. Currently, in Baltimore County, the Student Member possesses voting rights over all business except issues regarding collective bargaining, the Capital and operating budgets, and school closures, re-openings, and boundaries. In Baltimore County, student and staff support sit lowest at ten percent of current expenditures which account for addressing student needs and college and career readiness. School closures and/or unstable school environments propose current and long-term negative implications on the youth's health, development, academic attainment, and quality of learning. Governance on these issues remain gatekept by school officials. Yet, young people in crisis-oriented contexts experience the harms resulted from decision-making that does not respond to their needs. Youth participatory budgeting in local government expenditure challenges the gaps and inequalities in budgetary and bargaining processes and further advances social, environmental, and economic innovation.

Commented [AW1]: Two sentences on why it's important for the student member to be able to weigh in on all of these issues.

Therefore, Strong Future Maryland urges the committee to vote favorably on HB 192.

info@strongfuturemd.org

PO Box 164 | Arnold MD 21012

240-643-0024 | strongfuturemd.org

 @FutureMaryland  @StrongFutureMD