

# **HB 0175 Baltimore County Board of Education - Stud**

Uploaded by: Isabel Malizia

Position: FAV

February 2, 2023

**Testimony on HB 175  
Baltimore County Board of Education – Student Member - Voting  
Ways and Means**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 175, which would authorize the student member of the Baltimore County Board of Education to vote on capital and operating budget matters.

Currently, the student member of the Board (SMOB) votes on all issues except collective bargaining, capital and operating budgets, school openings and closings, and boundaries. Like any member of the Board, the SMOB is elected to represent the voice of their constituents, meaning the students of Baltimore County. As such, this representation should not be limited to certain issues, but extend to all areas that impact the SMOB's student constituents.

Common Cause Maryland is working to build the next generation of democracy leaders and believes that youth representation is key to further civic engagement in their future, the SMOB is a perfect example of this next generation.

Common Cause Maryland believes that the expansion of voting power to include capital and operating budget matters is imperative and finds the SMOB's input on school funding matters to be absolutely critical. These issues directly impact students in Baltimore County, and it should be expected that their elected representative has the ability to advocate for their interests.

As of today, the operating budget for Baltimore County Public Schools has increased by 5.5% equating to 91.5 million dollars based on Fiscal Year 2022, excluding capital projects. With the proposed 2023 budget, the school system is completing their largest ten-year construction program with projects including constructing new schools, adding/ replacing central air conditioning, etc., for "upgraded modern learning environments." If given the voting rights to capital and budget operating matters, the SMOB would directly influence how these projects would be implemented in the following school years.

The SMOB is a position that is a foray into further civic engagement in their lives post-graduation. They see firsthand what goes into improving educational public policy. **HB 175** would extend their power to include capital and operating budgets would enable them to see how their voice can impact the processes to enact policy in action.

Common Cause Maryland urges you to vote favorably on **HB 175**.

**BaltimoreCounty\_FAV\_HB0175.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joshua Greenberg

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*

JENNIFER AIOSA  
*Director of Government Affairs*

AMANDA KONTZ CARR  
*Legislative Officer*

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG  
*Associate Director of Government Affairs*

**BILL NO.:**           **HB 175**

**TITLE:**             Baltimore County Board of Education - Student Member -  
Voting

**SPONSOR:**        Delegate Ebersole

**COMMITTEE:**     Education, Energy, and the Environment

**POSITION:**       **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**            March 29, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** HB 175 – Baltimore County Board of Education – Student Member – Voting. This legislation would authorize the student member of the Baltimore County Board of Education to vote on capital and operating budget matters.

As a former student member and the parent of a BCPS student, County Executive Olszewski knows the critical insight student members provide as the representative most impacted by decisions made by the Board. Student members understand how young residents live their day-to-day lives and see firsthand the impacts administrative policy have on their education. These students are selected by their peers because they have proven to be capable of understanding a wide range of complex issues and possess the leadership qualities to address them head-on.

Today’s students are more engaged and informed than ever before. Young people are leading the way in civil advocacy and business innovation. Student members have a proven track record of exhibiting prudence and responsibility in budgetary, contractual, and system-wide matters. These dedicated civil servants deserve to have their voices empowered on issues that will undeniably have a direct effect on their educational experience moving forward.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 175. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).

**UNFAV HB175.pdf**

Uploaded by: Amy Adams

Position: UNF



March 28, 2023

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Chair Senator Feldman, Vice Chair Senator Kagan, and members of the committee,

The Baltimore County Parent and Student Coalition, Inc. is submitting UNFAVORABLE written testimony for HB 175, Baltimore County Board of Education-Student Member-Voting and Training.

The primary reason for our opposition to HB175 is due to **conflict of interest**.

Members of the Board of Education are prohibited from being current BCPS employees due to conflict of interest as stated in the BCPS Ethics Policies series 8360 through 8366.

The Student Member of the Board is a dependent in the public school system and relies on BCPS employees for evaluations, grades, and letters of recommendations for employment or college applications. With the passage of this bill, the Student Member of the Board will be voting on a budget that has direct implications to their teachers, advisors, and the superintendent which is a conflict of interest. [BCPS Ethics Policy 8363](#)

Second, there has been no compelling reason to grant full voting rights, specifically on fiscal decisions, to the Student Member of the Board who serves one term and is typically under the age of 18 years old.

We would also like to note that the BCPS Board of Education at their December 21, 2021, meeting voted NOT to include increased SMOB voting rights to the Legislative Priorities 2022. Nine of the twelve members, including the student member, did not vote in favor of adding SMOB voting rights to the Legislative Priorities of 2022.

This year, the current Board of Education did not hold a vote on HB175.

We ask you to respect the decision made by the majority of the BCPS Board of Education members who are locally elected and experienced officials.

Last year, HB 192 did not receive a unanimous favorable vote from the Baltimore County Delegation.

This year, HB175 did not receive a unanimous favorable vote from the Baltimore County Delegation.

We appreciate you taking the time to read our comments and are available for questions.

We encourage you to vote UNFAVORABLE on HB175 at this time.

Sincerely,

Amy Adams, BCPASC President

Mary A. Taylor, BCPASC Vice President

openbcps@gmail.com

# **Unfavorable HB0175.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jenn Reedholm

Position: UNF

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to oppose the bill for Student Members of School Boards (SMOB) to be allowed to vote for any budgetary items. My reasons are simple:

Most SMOB's aren't old enough to vote in government elections

Most SMOB's do not own a home, have to budget household income and expenses

Most SMOB's lack life experience to understand the full magnitude of financial decisions and how their vote can affect many different kinds of families, households, citizens and stakeholders of their school system.

Most SMOB's lack budgetary experience in general

Over the past few years, I have been watching various school board meetings across the state from Baltimore County, Montgomery County, Carrol County and Harford County. In every board meeting I find the SMOB to be overwhelmingly under prepared for the bigger issues, immature (shown with crying and tantrums) and having the lack of knowledge and experience to be voting on most topics. Having a SMOB vote on budget items that represent the taxpayers when they are not a taxpayer themselves nor do they represent the taxpayer voice, makes no sense. I do not want a child voting on items that affect my hard earned money paid into the system.

Please VOTE NO to the Bill



**HB0175 unfavorable BC BOE student.pdf**

Uploaded by: Theresa Myers

Position: UNF

March 27, 2023

Ref: Unfavorable HB0175

Dear Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

I am writing in an Unfavorable support for HB0175. The Student Body Board of Education Member should have voting rights. This is a position for the students to learn. They are not adults.

Please vote **unfavorably** for this bill.

Sincerely,

Theresa Myers