

Chair Brian Feldman  
Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan  
The Senate of Maryland  
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Position: SUPPORT for SB 0271

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and fellow committee members

I'm writing to express enthusiastic support for SB 0271, a bill which continues Maryland's national leadership in strengthening K-12 civic education for all of its students.

As a teacher, I support the Maryland legislature using its statutory authority to encourage the development of civic knowledge, dispositions, and skills that will prepare students for informed participation in our democracy. SB 0271 meets this criteria and would help my students develop confidence in their civic voice and sense of belonging in their community. Through using a diploma seal, it creates multiple pathways for recognizing a student's understanding of and contribution to the public life of their community, our state, and the nation.

Civic seals are an effective, widely adopted policy strategy for bolstering comprehensive civic education, and are currently being used by more than 10 states across the country. Within the context of Maryland, SB 0271 would build on the precedent established by Maryland seal of biliteracy, using an incentive-based strategy to encourage the adoption of educational best practice.

SB 0271 advances civic excellence by encouraging, but not requiring, local school systems to designate centers of civic engagement. Each center of civic engagement, in turn, would catalyze civic excellence through urging the adoption of commonsense, evidence-based practices like student access to social studies courses, voter registration, participation in student service, and more.

Finally, SB 0271 advances the priorities of Governor Moore, whose first executive order authorized the creation of an office for service and civic innovation. By encouraging students to learn the basics of how government works, this bill provides an opportunity for bipartisan partnership in the legislature and an occasion for the branches of government to work together on behalf of the public interest of our state's rising, young leaders. Nothing could be more important, nor more urgent.

For the foregoing reasons, I support SB 0271

Sincerely,  
Ms. Mahoney