



SB402 Kent County - Board of Education - Student Member

Wednesday, February 19, 2023

EDUCATION, ENERGY, & ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Our names are Mara Babb, Subhashi Pradhan, Noor Chaudhry, and Julien Halleman, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in support of SB402 Kent County - Board of Education - Student Member with certain amendments. If passed, the bill will establish the student member of Kent County and allow all high school students to elect the student member of the Kent County Board of Education. There is already a current Student Member of the Board (SMOB) for Kent County, thus this bill is just a formality to officially establish the SMOB and SMOB elections in legislation.

CRASC respectfully proposes the following amendments to SB402:

- Amend the bill to allow the student member to vote on issues concerning students

As the only district in the nation to have a [Student Member of the Board \(SMOB\)](#) with full voting rights, CRASC strongly supports the student member of the Kent County Board of Education to have full autonomy to act as a representative of the student body. The purpose of the student member as defined by SB402 would be to “Advise the county board on the thoughts and feelings of students.” As students, “advising” cannot be our only purpose and avenue to advocate for our peers effectively. In order for a SMOB to have any influence over policy, they must be given a voice not only through their position but through their vote. Student members are responsible for attending meetings, taking time off school, participating in committees, and representing all students in their district. They have the same expectations as all adult members of the Kent County Board of Education, however they do not have the same opportunity to vote on all issues concerning students like other members, guaranteeing their opinions are seen as equally valuable.

Additionally, this bill will allow all high school students of Kent County the opportunity to vote on a student that will represent their wants and needs, in regards to important county-wide issues. This will allow students to feel involved in local politics and encourage them to be civically engaged in the future. Some may say that students are uneducated voters leading to unqualified student members, however CRASC has been electing our student member with representative delegations every year since 1974. Since that time, we have seen determined leaders that successfully represent the interests of the students. Furthermore, the passing of this bill will still require the elected SMOB candidate to be appointed by the governor, ensuring that the elected student is in good standing to represent the student body.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* Opportunities for students to voice opinions on issues that directly affect students; (Plank 1, Clause F)
- *CRASC Supports...* Full voting rights for all Student Members on Boards of Education; (Plank 1, Clause B)
- *CRASC Supports...* Student participation in decision-making processes; (Plank 1, Clause G)
- *CRASC Supports...* A. Election of [each] Student Member of the Board of Education; (Plank 1, Clause A)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on SB402.

Respectfully Submitted,

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