



**Testimony in support of  
House Bill 568: Education – Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations –  
Student Discipline and Policy**

**Ways and Means Committee  
Position: Favorable**

February 22, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. **Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on House Bill 568: Education – Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations – Student Discipline and Policy.**

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a world-class system of public schools for our state’s students. In this system, the voices of students must be especially valued. The Blueprint cannot possibly address all the issues that will ever exist in the realm of public education, but its vision of World-Class schools can be achieved with the support of other accompanying policies that rise to meet the moment.

House Bill 568:

- Protects the free speech and peaceful assembly rights of students specifically to participate in and create their own peaceful demonstrations on school grounds;
- Prohibits public schools from imposing limits that inhibit students’ right to free speech during such demonstrations; and
- Prohibits public schools from disciplining students who participate in and/or organize such peaceful demonstrations

In Maryland and throughout the country, adults have taken full advantage of their first amendment right to free speech, even if it has meant turning school buildings and government buildings into battlegrounds. To deny Maryland's students their right to peacefully assert their own rights, would be to disenfranchise a generation of young people at a pivotal moment in history; furthermore, it would be in conflict with the intent of the Blueprint—to create a generation of Marylanders who can engage with and articulate their position in the social and political conflicts of the “real world.”

**For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 568.**

For more information, contact:

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