



HB175 Baltimore County Board of Education - Student Member - Voting

Thursday, January 26, 2023

WAYS & MEANS

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 HB175 Baltimore County Board of Education - Student Member - Voting with certain amendments. If passed, this bill will permit a Student Member of the Baltimore County Board of Education to further voice student perspective through authorizing the student member to vote on capital and operating budget matters.

CRASC respectfully proposes the following amendments to HB175:

- Remove “Hearings on appeals of special education placements;” from §3–2B–05(b)(1) of this bill
- Remove “School closings, reopenings, and boundaries.” from §3–2B–05(c)(4) of this bill

As the only district in the nation to have a [Student Member of the Board \(SMOB\)](#) with full voting rights, CRASC strongly supports the SMOB of the Baltimore County Board of Education to have full autonomy to act as a representative of the student body. SMOBs 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 Board of Education, however not all SMOBs have the same opportunity to vote on all issues like other members. This bill would guarantee the expansion of a student member’s rights so they can, in both law and appearance, be equal to other members, with their opinions being seen as equally valuable.

Some may argue that student members are uneducated surrounding capital and operating budget matters, however students are deeply impacted by these matters and student members are best equipped to address this through their intersectional understanding of their county’s fiscal status and impact on schools. Additionally, by allowing the SMOB to vote on school closings, reopenings, and boundaries students have a say in critical matters that affect them. Through involvement in all executive sessions, the SMOB will also have a more educated vote on issues they are not prohibited from voting on, such as appeals of special education placements. Even a single vote from a student member can have an extensive impact on the Board of Education by giving students greater confidence in their Board’s ability to represent their interests.

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)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB175.

Respectfully Submitted,

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