

My name is Brayden Wallace, and I am the Student Member of the Board for Kent County Public Schools. I am here today to testify in favor of House Bill 402 with an amendment. House Bill 402 proposes to alter the membership of the Kent County Board of Education to include a student member; and provides for the initial term of the student member of the county board to start on July 1. Student members provide insight and a unique perspective of what is happening in schools and therefore should be recognized as members. Legally recognizing the student member has the support of our Superintendent, Dr. Karen Couch, and the members of the Kent County Board of Education.

Currently, MD Education Code 3-801 states that the Kent County Board of Education consists of only five elected voting members. The student member of the board is not legally recognized in MD Education Code 3-801. However, in approximately 2007, the Kent County Board of Education voted to add a student member but this was never codified. Last year's student member, Sam Buckel, requested that this be considered and to amend MD Education Code 3-801 to include the student member as a legal member of the board. Since that time, I have met with Delegate Jacobs to discuss these changes, and the Kent County Board of Education voted on October 13th to present the proposed legislation to Delegate Jacobs. Essentially, I am asking you to vote in favor of a position that already exists in our local policy but simply needs to be added to MD Code 3-801.

As stated in House Bill 402, I also believe firmly that the student member of the board should be allowed into an executive session if invited by an affirmative vote of the majority of the board. I recognize that there may be only a very rare occasion that a student member's attendance is required in one the exceptions for a closed session.

I also urge you to consider an amendment to House Bill 402 to allow for partial voting rights of the Kent County Public Schools Student Member of the Board. Through my research, it appears that currently Anne Arundel's student member has full voting rights and the student members in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Charles, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties all have partial voting rights. House Bill 402 proposes to add that the student member may advise the county board on the thoughts and feelings of students in Kent County Public Schools. I agree, but I am also requesting the amendment for partial voting rights that would allow the student to vote on all matters except those relating to:

- (i) Geographical attendance areas;
- (ii) Acquisition and disposition of real property and matters pertaining to school construction;
- (iii) Employment of architects;
- (iv) Donations;
- (v) Consolidation of schools and transportation of students;
- (vi) Appointment and salary of a county superintendent;
- (vii) Employee discipline and other appeals;
- (viii) Budgetary matters;
- (ix) Appointment and promotion of staff ;
- (x) Discipline of certificated staff;
- (xi) Collective bargaining for certificated employees;
- (xii) Collective bargaining for noncertificated employees; and
- (xiii) Student suspension and expulsion.

Please keep in mind that many SMOBs, like myself are already 18 years old and able to vote in elections. We also provide valuable insight.....