

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 271
Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established**

**House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 271, which would establish the Maryland Civic Excellence Program to recognize students and public schools that promote the civic readiness and civic engagement of students in public schools in the State, require each participating local school system, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, to award a student a Seal of Civic Excellence if the student meets certain criteria, and designate a public school as a Center of Civil Excellence if the school meets certain requirements.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As recently reaffirmed at the MSEA Representative Assembly, we support legislation that enhances citizen participation in the political and voting process. The program described in this bill would encourage students to register to vote, participate in civic-minded extracurricular and volunteer activities, and strive for academic achievement in social studies, government, and civics coursework. We also urge greater equity of access to such educational experiences and support efforts to ensure a diverse, complete, and accurate social studies and civics education for all students.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 271.