HB0402 Kent County - Board of Education - Student Member
February 15, 2023
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Francoise Sullivan and I am a member of the Kent County Public Schools Board of Education. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this legislation with amendment.

Since being elected to the Board of Education in 2020 I have had the pleasure of working with 2 student members of the Board – Sam Buckel and Braydon Wallace. Both students expressed strong feelings about the position and the type of responsibilities that they held. In discussing and researching student member positions in other Maryland school districts we discovered that even though Kent County has had a student member on the board for many years the position was considered ceremonial and had never been formally recognized as a member of the board. This piece of legislation will give our student member of the board the formal recognition they deserve.

The perspective and experience of the student member is a valuable resource for any board of education. Student members are expected to be engaged with their schools and fellow students and to gauge and provide an overview of how students feel about school projects and policies. However, the confidential and legal nature of executive and closed sessions would preclude the need for a student member to participate in those discussions and decisions. I request that the following passage –

"UNLESS INVITED TO ATTEND BY AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF A MAJORITY OF THE COUNTY BOARD, THE STUDENT MEMBER MAY NOT ATTEND AN EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE COUNTY BOARD.

Be amended to –

"THE STUDENT MEMBER MAY NOT ATTEND AN EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE COUNTY BOARD."

I request a favorable report on House Bill 0402 with the proposed amendment. Thank you for your time.

Francoise Sullivan,
Board of Education Vice President
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