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CHESTERTOWN MD 21620

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 1, 2023

**Bill: House Bill 402 – Kent County - Board of Education - Student Member**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong SUPPORT of House Bill 402 – Kent County – Board of Education – Student Member, which will add Kent County to the many other Maryland school systems which currently provide for a student member on their Boards of Education.

I have spent my career in public education, serving Maryland's school systems since 1984, including time as MSDE Specialist for Psychological Services, and retiring as a supervisor for Psychological Services in 2015. During my time in public education, I have come to recognize the importance of listening to the voices of all of the stakeholders, particularly those of the students in our schools. Currently I serve on the Kent County Citizen Advisory Committee for that school system, although today I am writing as a private citizen, not speaking for that group.

I attend most Board of Education meetings in Kent County, where currently a high school student attends Board meetings, essentially as a guest. Over the past few years these impressive, well-informed young people have brought to Board meetings an important perspective on a wide range of student issues, concerns, and needs. Last year when the Kent County HS student body experienced a particularly traumatic episode during the school day, the student attending the Board meeting was able to share the student body's perspective on that episode, helping the Board to understand the gravity of the situation, and to respond more effectively. It is time to formalize this process by elevating the status of this student from that of a mere guest, to that of an actual member - albeit non-voting - with the ability to speak on many of the important matters discussed during the Board's meetings. Students in every Maryland school system deserve a seat, and a voice, at the table. For these reasons, I would ask for a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 402.

Thank you for considering my comments on HB 402. If I can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at [wmflook@gmail.com](mailto:wmflook@gmail.com) or 410-703-1791

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

*Wm. Flook, Ph.D.*

William Flook, Ph.D.