



Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Testimony in Support of SB 762

February 15, 2024

To the Honorable Members of the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am an attorney and a longtime resident of Montgomery County. I am pleased to express my strong support for Senate Bill 762, which aims to establish the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program. And I commend Senators Kagan and Ready for their leadership on this important piece of legislation.

I believe that is essential to our democracy that our students are prepared to be informed, engaged, responsible participants in our democracy. I believe our schools can and should be doing more to provide our students with the tools they need to play their essential role as citizens and as voters.

Speaking personally, I can say that reflecting on all of the terrific classes I had between high school, college, and law school, the class that had the most profound impact on my life was my high school civics class.

As the recent Report of the Educating for American Democracy Initiative states:

“The relative neglect of civic education in the past half-century – a period of wrenching change – is one important cause of our civic and political dysfunction. . . Excellence in civic and history education represents a part of the solution; it should be a foundation of our national civic infrastructure.”

The establishment of a Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program represents an important and constructive step forward. By formally recognizing students who excel in their understanding and participation in civic life, we can:

- Motivate students to engage more deeply with civic education and activities.
- Highlight the importance of being informed about local, state, and national issues.
- Encourage schools to prioritize civic learning in their curricula.

I therefore strongly support the passage of SB 762. This legislation is not just about recognizing deserving students; it's about investing in the future of our democracy and ensuring that our young people are prepared to play an active and constructive role in our democratic society. I urge the committee to support the passage of this bill, paving the way for a more engaged, informed, and civic-minded generation.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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