



SB0386 - County Boards of Education - Student Members - Voting Rights and Participation in Executive Sessions

Monday, February 5, 2024

EDUCATION, ENERGY, & THE ENVIRONMENT **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

Our names are Mara Babb, Subhashi Pradhan, Noor Chaudhry, and Julien Halleman, and we are students of Anne Arundel County Public Schools. On behalf of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC), we are writing in support of SB0386 - County Boards of Education - Student Members - Voting Rights and Participation in Executive Sessions. If passed, this bill establishes a set of voting rights for all student members on the board (SMOB), regardless of what voting rights they currently have. The SMOBs stipulated in the bill would be able to vote on any matter other than personnel matters and appeals to the Superintendent.

CRASC respectfully proposes the following amendment to SB0386:

- Strike any sections of this bill in which the additions restrict existing voting rights of student members on local boards of education in certain counties/city (Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County)

CRASC is in strong support of the intent of this bill to expand the voting rights of SMOBs. Anne Arundel County's student member on the board of education has had full voting rights for decades to make educated decisions on all matters before the board. Through this privilege as a student leader, the Anne Arundel County SMOB stands out amongst others in Maryland as a representation of youth empowerment and resolve to hold the same rank on paper and in practice as adult members on the board.

This bill grants many counties rights that the student member would otherwise be deprived of on a systematic level. However, this conversely sets a baseline that takes away the established rights of multiple SMOBs, including in Anne Arundel County and Montgomery County. CRASC proposes to adjust the language of this bill without changing the intent of expanding voting rights for all SMOBs, and setting a flexible baseline based on the established rights of the county/city. These expanded voting rights will build a mutual trust between student and adult members, creating a culture of equality and excellence akin to the Anne Arundel County Board of Education.

CRASC is currently working with the Anne Arundel County Delegation to propose the stipulated amendments on the bill and urges the support of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee to pass this bill.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* "Full voting rights for all Student Members on Boards of Education;" (Plank I, Clause B)
- *CRASC Supports...* Opportunities for students to voice opinions on issues that directly affect students; (Plank 1, Clause F)
- *CRASC Supports...* Student participation in decision-making processes; (Plank 1, Clause G)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on SB0386.

Respectfully Submitted,

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