

Chair Brian Feldman
Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan
The Senate of Maryland
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,

My name is Safora Noor, and I am currently a High School Student at Towson High School. I am here to express my earnest support for Senate Bill 762, the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence, through my personal testimony.

Through my experience in many organizations such as my regional and state student government and non-profit organizations, I have worked with individuals who have spent years serving their communities. I have met other students who volunteer themselves every time for things that promote civics. For me personally, being engaged in such organizations has allowed me to learn more about how the government and democracy work. Being involved means that I and my peers have put in several hours teaching others about civics and learning new things ourselves. With everything that I have done in organizations like Maryland Association of Student Councils and Dear Asian Youth, I have enjoyed participating in the broader community and impacting others in a positive light. This bill is significant to me and my peers as it validates our efforts in civic engagement. It's not just an award; it's a recognition that young Marylanders' contributions to democracy are invaluable.

The Seal of Civic Excellence motivates students like me to become informed and active participants in our democracy. The many provisions in the bill motivate students in the state to take government classes and perform well in those classes. Such classes allow students to learn about the democratic process and give students many opportunities to get involved in civics. Personally, classes like AP Government and Politics allowed me to gain insight on statewide and national legislation, which motivated me to have my voice heard. Additionally, the service learning hour requirement motivates students to be civically engaged not just for the sake of getting enough service learning hours, but to do something from which the student can learn more about civics and educate others on what civics is.

I urge the committee to support SB 762, reinforcing the message that the involvement of young people is crucial for our state's democratic health.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for the opportunity to express my views.

Sincerely,
Safora Noor
Baltimore County