

**February 16, 2024**

**Testimony on Senate Bill 762**  
**Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established**  
**Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 1800 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support Senate Bill 762, to recognize and promote the vital role of civic knowledge, skills, and engagement among public school students in Maryland.

Senate Bill 762 establishes a program to formally acknowledge both students and schools that exhibit a profound commitment to civic involvement, by highlighting the critical importance of civic education in developing participatory, thoughtful citizens, and in strengthening our democracy.

As an organization we encourage nonprofits to support public policies that will facilitate and promote the public's engagement in their government by freely exercising their right to vote and by advocating their views on policy to their elected representatives.

This legislation will promote enhanced civic education, the appreciation of diverse perspectives, and the importance of active engagement in the democratic process. In short it will foster the critical thinking essential for an engaged citizenry.

At a time when many forces seem to be alienating the public from their own government, programs like the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence are crucial investments in our democratic future.

We urge your committee to give Senate Bill 762 a Favorable Report.

