

SB 762 FAV

Good Afternoon Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and esteemed Committee members. My name is Hailey Wildesen and I am a senior at Northern Garrett High School in Garrett County. I am a member of the Maryland Association of Student Councils and the Maryland Civic Education Coalition's Youth Advisory Council. I would like to share my personal perspective on Civic Seals. As a society, we have a responsibility to ensure that our students receive a high-quality education that prepares them to be active and engaged citizens. This includes providing us with the knowledge, skills, and values we need to participate in the democratic process and to make informed decisions about the issues that affect our communities.

The creation of civic seals to recognize students who are dedicated to civic education would be an important step toward achieving this goal. These seals would recognize and reward students who have demonstrated a commitment to civic engagement and who have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in our democracy. Moreover, the civic seals would serve as valuable credentials for students as they apply to college or enter the workforce. It would demonstrate to potential employers and higher education institutions that we as students have taken the initiative to engage in civic education, and are therefore more likely to be informed, responsible, and active members of their community. Through my work with the Maryland Civic Education Coalition and multiple other organizations, I have gained skills which I have implemented locally in my district to help engage other youth in voter registration and the democratic process. This is a prime example of how influential civic education can be to increase youth democratic participation. I strongly support the implementation of civic seals so we can help to ensure that our future leaders are informed, engaged, and committed to making a positive difference in their communities and in our country as a whole. Therefore I urge a favorable report on SB 762. Thank you!