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**TESTIMONY ON SB762 - FAVORABLE  
Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established**

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 762, the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence Bill, as it comes before the Ways & Means Committee in the Maryland House of Delegates.

As an educator who values the importance of civic engagement and recognizes the need for increased opportunities for civic engagement for students, I believe that the establishment of the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program represents a significant advancement. This program has the potential to revitalize civics education and inspire students to play an active role in shaping our democracy. By fostering a sense of empowerment, inclusivity, community connection, and responsibility among students, civic engagement can contribute to a more positive school climate where students feel valued, engaged, and motivated to make a difference.

We have witnessed the negative impact of hateful political rhetoric on our democratic processes at the federal and across states in recent years. We must educate the next generation of leaders to do better in sharing different points of view on important policy topics, respecting one another as fellow citizens, facilitating community engagement, and restoring faith in our government.

I respectfully urge the Ways & Means Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 762. By investing in students' civic education and recognizing their contributions, we can empower the next generation to lead with integrity and compassion.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Heather Wyatt-Nichol, PhD  
University of Baltimore  
And Parent of a Baltimore County Public School Student