



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
House Bill 86: Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools – Title VI
Coordinators**

Appropriations Committee

Position: Support

February 4, 2025

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint envisions a public school system that protects and supports *all* students. **Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 86**, which seeks to require that the governing board of each local school system designate a Title VI Coordinator to ensure compliance with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in educational programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.¹ Title VI mandates major protections for student groups who have been historically and systemically disenfranchised and marginalized by the education system. Despite progress made to protect and uplift these student groups, communities continue to face both covert and overt discrimination.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, one-third of high school students report having experienced racism in schools, disproportionately impacting Black and Brown students. Further, they found that poor mental health and suicide risk are consistently higher among students who reported having experienced racism in schools. Students might experience racism because of discrimination and bias embedded within current school policies and practices or as a result of interactions with those in the school environment, including other students, teachers, or administrators.²

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is built upon the principle of equity and this proposed legislation aligns in this mission. By requiring designated Title VI coordinators at the local school system level, HB86 mandates necessary accountability structures in order to protect the rights of students and families. The employment of Title VI coordinators ensures that every school system has access to a person with expertise in these critical protections codified in law who can provide training and educational resources, document complaints, and maintain records.

Many LEAs in Maryland currently employ Title VI Coordinators. House Bill 86 strengthens current approaches by mandating that every county in Maryland do so. As a result, this is a critical step in ensuring that Maryland's public education system promotes equitable access to high quality learning environments for all students.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 86.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.

¹ [Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964](#)

² [Experiences of Racism in School, 2024](#)