



## Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

### SB0008 Education – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established

Bill Hearing Date January 29, 2025

Position: Support

January 24, 2025

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Kinsley Potts, and I am a resident of Baltimore County. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 0008, which seeks to establish the **Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program**. As a tenth-grade student at Garrison Forest School, I've seen firsthand how vital civic education is in developing responsible, informed citizens. Unfortunately, civic engagement often gets overlooked in our education system, and this bill presents a crucial opportunity to change that. Establishing the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program opens the door for more youth involvement in Civics and recognition of the youth tirelessly working to serve and impact their communities.

The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence will:

- **Encourage** students to engage more deeply with **civic education and activities**.
- Help students **gain and apply leadership and collaborative skills**.
- Highlight the importance of **staying up to date** on current local, state, and national issues.
- Inspire schools to **integrate more civic learning** into their curricula.

Personally, Civic engagement has affected my life in a meaningful and fulfilling way by teaching skills of collaboration and responsibility and further developing my morals of compassion, selflessness and empathy. My first service event I planned on my own was a free community painting and backpack giveaway event, where I gave away 50 backpacks full of school supplies. Seeing the impact I could make in my community, even with a small event, was heart-warming and has inspired me to want and feel the need to serve. Over time, that need has grown exponentially. I am forever grateful for civic engagement, which has sparked my passion and helped me recognize the importance of uplifting and helping those around me. I started participating in leadership opportunities at school, like becoming an ambassador. It led me to encourage my friends to participate to feel the same sense of purpose and see the impact ANYONE can make in their community. Civic engagement sparked a drive in me to make the world a better place day by day that I wouldn't have had without civics.

It drove me to the place I am today, writing a testimony in support of a bill that will positively affect the future politicians, lawmakers, and leaders of tomorrow. The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence will raise the numbers of youth involved in Civics and prepare them to be morally sound citizens and future leaders dedicated to making Maryland a place we are proud to call home. It will also let us confidently say that the people we are handing our positions of leadership to are equipped to uphold the laws and morals of our country honorably.

In conclusion, **SB0008** is an investment in the future of Maryland's democracy. By supporting this bill, the committee will help ensure that Maryland's students are empowered to contribute to their communities actively. I respectfully urge the support of this bill to inspire and empower students and future leaders who will be seated in your chairs and making decisions across Maryland to make a difference in their communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Kinsley Potts**

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## House Ways & Means Committee

### HB0072 Education – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established

Bill Hearing Date January 29, 2025

Position: Support

[Date]

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of [County]. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 0072, which seeks to establish the **Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program**.

As [a student/a teacher/a parent/an advocate], I have seen firsthand the importance of civic education in shaping responsible, informed citizens. Unfortunately, civic engagement often takes a backseat in our educational system, and this bill offers a critical opportunity to change that.

The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence will:

- Encourage students to engage more deeply with civic education and activities.
- Highlight the importance of staying informed on local, state, and national issues.
- Inspire schools to integrate more civic learning into their curricula.

[Include a brief personal story or example that demonstrates the impact of civic engagement and how the program will benefit students and society.]

In conclusion, **HB0072** is an investment in the future of Maryland's democracy. By supporting this bill, the committee will help ensure that Maryland's students are empowered to actively contribute to their communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]