

**SB307, Anne Arundel County Board of Education – Student Member
Scholarship – Increase
*In Support Of***

Hello, my name is Michelle Fadele, and I am a junior at Chesapeake High School. I am writing in support of SB307, *Anne Arundel County Board of Education – Student Member Scholarship – Increase*. If passed, this bill would ensure that the Student Member of the Board (SMOB) receives compensation equal to that of the other board members.

What makes our SMOB position in Anne Arundel unique is that we are the only school district in the nation where the student member has full voting rights—meaning they carry the same responsibilities and workload as every other board member. Historically, all board members, except the President and Vice President, received \$8,000 in compensation. However, recent legislation increased the pay for certain board members from \$8,000 to \$15,000—yet the student member was excluded from this increase. However, recent legislation increased the pay for all board members by \$7,000 - everyone except the student member. That exclusion is puzzling. As I mentioned, all board members share the same duties, responsibilities, and roles in representing a specific group, whether by region or population. So why was one member left out? It simply doesn't add up. The principle is simple: equal work should mean equal pay.

To put this into perspective, imagine you and your fellow Senators in the Senate, all representing your respective districts. One day, a pay raise is approved—great news! But then, one Senator is left out—let's say it's the youngest member. While everyone else celebrates, this person sees their compensation stay the same. Two things stand out here: first, it's unfair; they're missing out on the same raise that benefits everyone else. Second, what justification could possibly support this decision? Would you be able to continue your work knowing this unfair action is occurring? Simply put again, equal work should mean equal pay.

The increase for other board members went into effect as of December, 2024. If this bill passes, it will correct this oversight and ensure that our current SMOB receives the same compensation as their colleagues. This change would not only establish fairness among board members, but it would also continue Anne Arundel County's long-standing commitment to treating its representatives equitably.

A favorable report will bring an equitable change. A favorable report will acknowledge the student voice being represented. A favorable report will demonstrate Maryland's commitment to student leadership. Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, I request for a favorable report on SB307.

Respectfully,
Michelle Fadele
michellefadele@gmail.com

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