

January 27, 2025

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Makenzie Johnson, and I am a resident of Anne Arundel County. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 0072, which seeks to establish the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program.

Civic education plays a crucial role in empowering citizens to engage responsibly and knowledgeably in their communities. Unfortunately, civic engagement is often deprioritized in our educational curriculum. This bill presents a vital opportunity to enhance civic education within our schools.

The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence will:

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

Civic engagement fosters equality and fairness, contributing significantly to the future of our society. The implementation of this program aims to improve educational opportunities not just for college students, but also for high school students, promoting inclusion and equity. It will inspire high schoolers to explore governmental pathways while they consider their future careers.

During the summer, as I prepared for my senior year, I had the opportunity to join the Maryland Civic Engagement Coalition (MDCEC). Through this experience, I learned about the challenges and initiatives impacting education in Maryland. This exposure opened my eyes to aspects of our history and civic life that I wasn't previously aware of. Participating in these opportunities has empowered me and my peers to contribute positively to the educational landscape.

In conclusion, supporting Senate Bill 0008 represents an investment in the future of Maryland's democracy. By endorsing this bill, the committee will help empower students to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Makenzie Johnson

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