



HB402 Anne Arundel County Board of Education - Student Member Scholarship - Increase

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

WAYS AND MEANS

SUPPORT

Our names are Julien Halleman, Noah Gordon, Olivia Chin, and Dhru Nahan, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in support of HB402 Anne Arundel County Board of Education - Student Member Scholarship - Increase. If passed, this bill would increase the scholarship given to the Anne Arundel County Student Member of the Board from \$8000 to \$15000, thus matching the recent increase of the other members' salaries.

Historically, the Anne Arundel County SMOB has been compensated equally to other board members, and it makes sense to continue this precedent, and not doing so is blatantly discriminatory. Given that the SMOB holds full voting rights and participates in every committee and hearing, they are equal to other board members and therefore deserve equal compensation. The SMOB also works the same amount as other board members while remaining a full-time student, further justifying their equal compensation.

The \$7,000 increase in expenditures is insignificant to the Anne Arundel County budget, especially in the context of this situation. The SMOB role is highly demanding, and the student representative sacrifices opportunities to work paying jobs or internships that could offer more income. By raising the scholarship to \$15,000, the diversity of candidates would increase, as lower-income students would be more incentivized to run for SMOB. Thus a wider range of perspectives from various diverse backgrounds present in AACPS would be greater represented in the election process.

Furthermore, over time, tuition at universities has significantly increased due to inflation. For example, the total cost of attendance at the University of Maryland is roughly \$30,000 per year, while the current \$8,000 scholarship only covers just over a quarter of those costs. Increasing the scholarship would be an important step toward making higher education more affordable for SMOBs.

As one of the only counties in the country with a SMOB who holds full voting rights—and the only truly full-voting-right SMOB in Maryland—AACPS students take pride in their SMOB as a representative of those without a voice in a process that has a profound impact on students' lives. Such an important figure deserves equal compensation.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* Student participation in the decision-making processes; (Plank 1, Clause G)
- *CRASC Supports...* Adequate funding for different student programs within Anne Arundel County Public Schools; (Plank 8, Clause D)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB402.

Respectfully Submitted,

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