House Ways & Means Committee

HB0072 Education – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established

Bill Hearing Date January 29, 2025

Position: Support

January 24, 2025

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Maria Garza-Holguin, a senior at North County High School, member of Maryland Civic Education Coalition Youth Advisory Council, and 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**.

As a student, I have witnessed firsthand the importance of civic education in shaping responsible, informed citizens. Despite this, civic engagement is not perceived rightfully in the educational system, but this bill permits an opportunity to transcend and uplift the value of civics.

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.

With my experience of moving to multiple states, I have deeply acknowledged the interrelationship between active participation and bridging diverse communities. From my experience, I assure myself, alongside many others, foster their identity and find a sense of belonging and purpose through civics. Thus, this program will ensure youth to expatiate the duties bestowed upon our democracy, while simultaneously cultivating future generations to lead through individual responsibility and global awareness. I find it crucial that youth, as a representation of our future, have this program that ensures an informative and resilient society.

Ultimately, **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,
Maria Garza-Holguin
Anne Arundel County