

## **Support for SB8- Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence**

March 17, 2025

Dear Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Candacé Jackson, Vice President of Public Policy and Strategic Partnerships for the Greater Baltimore Urban League, an organization dedicated to ensuring African Americans and other minority groups secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. We strive daily to empower communities across the state of Maryland and to transform lives in the areas of education, health, workforce development, and entrepreneurship.

I am here today to represent our membership as we advocate for the passage of SB 8- Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence Program. As a civil rights organization that is over a century old, we strive to support those causes that help to alleviate disparities and increase opportunity across the state, especially in education.

The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence Program, although voluntary, will allow for students across the state to complete service learning hours and prioritize civic education. Under this current administration, it is imperative that we emphasize a greater understanding of civic education and what the local, state, and national governments are able to do under the law. A continued lack of understanding of civics has the potential to negatively impact elections and take vulnerable communities out of the conversation in spaces where decisions are made. Additionally, the service-learning component will allow for students to gain not just theoretical but practical experience within their communities. The contribution of service learning would be impactful to their future college, job, or trade application in addition to pouring back into their local communities.

Again, the Greater Baltimore Urban League in coalition with others humbly seek your support for SB 8.

Thank you,

Candacé Jackson, JD, LL.M.  
Vice President  
Greater Baltimore Urban League  
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