

CHERYL C. KAGAN
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee

Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Joint Committee on Federal Relations



Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3134
800-492-7122 Ext. 3134
Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB8: Maryland Civic Excellence Program

House Ways & Means Committee
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Our democracy depends on the next generation's engagement in civic affairs. Successful completion of civics courses in schools is associated with higher rates of volunteering, higher scores on the AP Government exam, and higher voter turnout among young adults. According to the Fordham Institute, Maryland's civics curriculum is strong but has room for improvement.

The bipartisan [SB8](#) would encourage civic engagement by creating a "Maryland Civic Excellence Program." Participating local school systems would have the opportunity to:

- Award a Seal of Civic Excellence to high school students who:
 - Excel on civics exams;
 - Succeed in civics courses (an A or a B in US History, Modern World History, and American Government); and
 - Serve their communities. (At least 30 of 75 total Student Service-Learning hours must focus on civic engagement.)
- Designate a public school as a Center of Civic Excellence if at least 50% of its students have earned a Seal.

Students who apply and earn a Seal would get a cord, a medal, or an insignia on their diploma. Schools would receive a banner, a Governor's citation, or a citation from the MD State Department of Education.

Twelve other states (AZ, CA, GA, IN, NC, NV, NY, OH, OK, PA, TN, and VA) either already have or are in the process of implementing a Civic Seal Program. Let's reward our young leaders for their involvement in our democracy!

The 2023 (introduced by Senator Ready), 2024, and 2025 versions of this bill each passed the Senate unanimously.

I urge a favorable report on SB8.