

House of Delegates Ways & Means Committee

SB8 Education – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established

Bill Hearing Date: March 19, 2025

Position: Support

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Gregory Moore, president of the Promise of Democracy Foundation, headquartered in Prince George’s County. I am writing to express my strong support for SB8/HB72, which seeks to establish the Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence program.

I am a longtime voting rights advocate and supporter of the expansion of civic education and civic participation among all Maryland citizens, but especially our young people. Civics have played a major role in shaping our local, state and national government.

Unfortunately, in recent years, civics has taken a backseat in our educational system, and is occurring at the worst possible time.

The rapidly decreasing level of civility and decorum has overwhelmed our political system in Washington. How a bill becomes a law is getting lost in the raging battles over executive orders, the dismantling of government agencies and disruptive misinformation campaigns that are threatening our very democracy. The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence is an opportunity for the Maryland legislature to push back against this disruptive direction.

The Maryland Seal of Civic Excellence has widespread support from diverse stakeholders, including students, educators, civic organizations, and state education leaders. It is also part of a growing national movement as many states have already adopted similar cost-effective initiatives to strengthen civic education and encourage youth engagement.

The Seal of Civic Excellence will:

- Encourage students to engage more deeply in civic education, leadership, and service.
- Highlight the importance of staying informed on local, state, and national issues.
- Inspire schools to integrate more civics into their curricula and recognize student achievement.
- This bill will increase my grandchild’s view of the world by teaching him the principles democracy.

In conclusion, SB8/HB72 is an inexpensive and cost-effective investment in the future of Maryland's democracy. Perhaps most importantly, the bill has bipartisan support and can be passed with no additional cost to the state. The civics seal concept has a proven track record of success in other states. By supporting this bill, the committee will help ensure that Maryland students are recognized for their civic leadership and prepared to actively contribute to their communities.

It is past time to pass the Maryland Civic Seal of Excellence into law—three years since its first introduction. I urge each member of this committee to support SB8/HB72 and finally vote the bill out of committee for final consideration by the General Assembly.

Thank you,

Gregory T. Moore

President, Promise of Democracy Foundation

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