



SB526 - Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – March 4, 2026
Position: Favorable

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps by expanding both the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for school-aged young people. MOST also serves as the backbone organization for the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools and MENTOR Maryland | DC.

On behalf of the Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST), I write in strong support of SB526 to honor and celebrate Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day in Maryland.

As Maryland's statewide afterschool network, MOST works to advance positive youth development by ensuring young people have access to safe, supportive, and enriching learning environments — in school and beyond the school day. Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day aligns deeply with that mission.

Ruby Bridges is not only a civil rights icon; she is a powerful example of courage, resilience, and the transformative impact of equitable access to public education. Her story provides an age-appropriate opportunity for young people to explore themes of belonging, bravery, justice, and community responsibility. These are core protective factors in positive youth development — helping young people build identity, confidence, empathy, and civic awareness.

For Maryland's afterschool, summer, mentoring, and community school partners, this day is more than symbolic. It offers a meaningful platform to engage youth in conversations about history, equity, and their own power to create change. It also reinforces the importance of safe routes to school and community safety — ensuring that young people can physically access the educational spaces designed to support their growth.

In a year when fiscal resources are limited, SB526 represents a high-impact, low-cost opportunity to promote student safety, civic learning, and community connection across the state. Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day strengthens the very conditions that help young people thrive.

For these reasons, MOST respectfully urges a FAVORABLE report on SB526.

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