

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Will Andrione. I am a senior at Severna Park High School. I serve as the Secretary of Legislation for CRASC, or AACPS Student Government, and I am here today in strong support of SB0535.

A bill that authorizes county library boards to add a 1-year voting high school member and establishes eligibility and selection criteria.

Youth representation matters deeply. Students bring lived experience and fresh ideas into decisions that affect their peers. Students offer perspectives adults lack, ensuring full community representation

This is no different for library boards of trustees. Having a student at the table means that the board directly listens to the demographic that uses and is impacted by materials and spaces that teens use, boosting their engagement.

But it's not just that the other board members have to hear from a student; the student members' vote carries the same weight as any adult member. When a student or youth participates simply in an advisory capacity, they can just be thanked and then ignored; a student voting member ensures that youth input is a part of the actual decision, not an afterthought.

Students today face digital fatigue from endless screens, mental health gaps with waitlists for counselors, and post-pandemic isolation—issues my peers live with daily. A voting student

trustee ensures libraries stock coping resources, safe study spaces, and relevant tech, not guesses from adults. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB0535.

Thank you