

HB 1171: Howard County Board of Education - Student Member - Voting Ho. Co. 7-26:
Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I am writing as a concerned resident of Maryland to strongly oppose **HB 1171**.

While student input and perspectives are valuable and should be heard, granting formal voting power to a minor on a local board of education that makes binding decisions about budgets, policies, personnel, school boundaries, and millions of taxpayer dollars **is inappropriate**. My main concerns include:

- **Lack of accountability:** The student member is not elected by the general public or by property taxpayers who fund the schools. They serve for only one year and are not subject to the same legal responsibilities or long-term consequences as adult board members.
- **Maturity and experience:** Important decisions involving school redistricting, budgets, curriculum, and operations require adult judgment, experience, and a full understanding of fiscal, legal, and community-wide impacts.
- **Precedent and local control:** Expanding student voting rights in one county creates inconsistency across Maryland and undermines the principle that elected adult board members — accountable to voters — should hold decision-making authority.
- **Dilution of adult responsibility:** Giving voting rights to a student shifts real power away from the adults who are legally and financially responsible for public education outcomes.

The Howard County Board of Education already provides ample opportunities for student voice through advisory roles, public comment periods, and direct input. Formal voting authority is not necessary and risks politicizing student representation.

I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 1171** and vote against its passage in the Senate. Decisions affecting Howard County public schools should remain in the hands of accountable, elected adult board members.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important education accountability legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals