

**FAVORABLE**  
**House Bill 575**  
**Public Schools - Student Attendance - Excused Absences for Civic Engagement**

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**April 7, 2026**

**Lauren Lamb**  
**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 575, which would require each county board of education to adopt an attendance policy to excuse absences for civic engagement by public school students.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

While classroom lessons are important, there is no replacement for experiential learning. Educators know the importance of balancing both. Research suggests that students who participate in experiential learning around advocacy and the legislative process are more likely to be civically engaged throughout their lives.<sup>1</sup>

Engaging with elected officials or community partners is an impactful culmination of students' learning about civic engagement, advocacy, and policy development. We see the value in accommodating such experiences and ensuring that students can make their voices heard without academic consequences. The policies developed under this bill will address those situations thoughtfully.

**We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 575.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Advocating for Engagement: Do Experiential Learning Courses Boost Civic Engagement? [Glover, Robert W.](#); Lewis, Daniel C.; Meagher, Richard; [Owens, Katherine A.](#) *Journal of Political Science Education* (2021). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1327442>