

Written Testimony of Kevin Jose Lopez Cruz

“HB 0627 — Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education – Establishment”
House Ways and Means Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Kevin J. Lopez Cruz. I am a Bowie State University English major and aspiring professor and a Maryland resident invested in public education and the public humanities.

I submit this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of HB 0627, which establishes the Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education.

At its core, HB 0627 is a nonpartisan investment in Maryland’s civil society. A healthy civic society depends on people who understand how institutions work, can evaluate evidence, and can participate constructively—even when they disagree. In an era shaped by polarization and misinformation, strengthening civics and history education is one of the most practical ways to prepare students for adulthood and citizenship. This bill does not ask schools to tell students what to think. Rather, it supports stronger learning so the next generation can participate in public life with knowledge, confidence, and responsibility.

HB 0627 is timely and necessary. Maryland, like the nation, is navigating an era of polarization, rapid misinformation, and declining trust in shared institutions. That environment does not resolve itself. It is shaped over time by what people know, how they reason, and whether they feel equipped to participate in public life. Civics and history are not enrichment topics. *Civics are, as they have been, for centuries, the base of civil society.* They teach how institutions work, how rights and responsibilities function in practice, and how to evaluate evidence with discipline rather than impulse or ideological persuasion.

Maryland has built strong public narratives around STEM because it is understood as essential preparation for the future. Civic learning deserves the same seriousness, visibility, and investment. We should celebrate civics not as an add on, but as a core competency for adulthood and self government. HB 0627 moves Maryland in that direction by creating a transparent and representative process for strengthening what students learn about the state they live in and the democracy they inherit.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a Favorable Report on HB 0627.

Respectfully submitted,

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