



Public Schools - Student Attendance - Excused Absences for Civic Engagement

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

WAYS AND MEANS

FAVORABLE

The Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC) requests a favorable report on HB0575.

The Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC) is the representative organization of all students enrolled in the secondary schools of AACPS, dedicated to elevating youth voice and promoting student leadership.

HB0575 supports CRASC's mission by requiring county Boards of Education to develop a policy that excuses up to 2 school days for certain civic activities. HB0575 recognizes that civic engagement is a lawful and excused absence.

CRASC supports "Opportunities for students to voice opinions on issues that directly affect students"(Plank I, F) and "Student participation in decision-making processes" (Plank 1, G). HB0575 aligns with those priorities by protecting a student's ability to testify before the General Assembly, whether in person or virtually, as well as their ability to participate in other civic activities. It allows for all students, not just those with partial schedules or with lenient attendance policies, to contribute their youth input on important issues.

Additionally, CRASC supports "School-based programs that encourage civic participation" (Plank III, E) and "Initiatives that encourage students that reward utilization of their educational opportunities" (Plank III, K). By treating civics as an excuse for absence, for at least 2 school days or 15 hours, it encourages students to apply what they learned in classes like government or history to the real world, with real-world advocacy.

Accordingly, the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0575 from the committee.

Thank you,

William Andrione, *Secretary of Legislation*



Alma Naghedi, Vivi Chin, and Veda Puvvala, *Legislative Liaisons*