

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB0575, which ensures that students who participate in civic activities, including testifying at Maryland General Assembly hearings or engaging in other designated civic programs, can do so without penalty to their attendance records.

Civic engagement is a critical part of education and prepares students to be informed, active, and responsible citizens. By excusing absences for these activities, HB0575 encourages students to take part in government processes, learn firsthand how democracy works, and develop leadership and communication skills.

This bill demonstrates that Maryland values the practical education of students in real-world civic participation, and it helps integrate classroom learning with meaningful community involvement. I strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of HB0575 to support and empower our next generation of civic-minded leaders.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Thompson