

SUPPORT: Senate Bill 352
Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program
Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 3, 2026

My name is Semaiah Luma, a Baltimore City Public Schools student at Western High School and I am writing **in strong support of Senate Bill 352**, Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program - Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses.

I believe that the city should invest into more art based learning. Supporting the artists that are local will strengthen the community. I am a small business owner and want to grow my art business to a larger scale. Having a business requires looking to the city for funding or resources. My school did not equip me with outside resources for art. Art was underlooked, compared to STEM opportunities. Since art is something I want to do as a career I used my own time to find art programs and internships. I use my passion for art to paint, draw, and design. Art has always been my favorite subject and I know others feel the same. I struggle finding the funding and resources to pursue it. I know others have that same issue. Students my age might not have the resources to be exposed to arts education because of school funding.

Currently, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future states that **concentration of poverty funds from the personnel and per pupil grant** may be used through fiscal year 2027 to provide the programs required under COMAR 13A.04 ([2022, HB1450, §5-223\(c\)\(9\), Pg. 3](#), repeated in [2025, HB504§5-223\(c\)\(9\)](#), Pg. 16) for core subject areas, including the fine arts. By supporting SB289 and eliminating the sunset timeline in law, you will help ensure that arts education, along with other core subjects, continues to be an allowable use of funding to support each individual student's needs.

I grew up thinking art wasn't an option in society and it will be harder to move up the ladder. Starting my business at 12 gave me the creative freedom to explore my style and how I wanted to impact my community. Now I give back and donate my own published coloring books to people. My activity books impacted children and adults to be inspired. One adult even told me she wanted to make her own coloring books after she saw mine. In her generation art wasn't a career option and was looked down on. I enjoy hearing people's stories about how they found their passion again after they thought it was a stable option. Baltimore has so much potential and spaces that need more eyes on them. I think everyone should have the space to think creatively and work on their craft. This idea of art not being a career option starts in the classroom.

Taking care of the youth matters, exposing them to pathways, and investing in their interest leads to successful students in the future. Schools are a place for education and preparing kids for real life. More art classes should be available in all schools. Art is real life and deserves to be recognized.

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By supporting this bill and eliminating the sunset language, school communities will **continue having the option** to invest their CPG funding in the arts in response to community need.

I urge the committee to provide a **favorable report on SB352**. Thank you for investing and taking in consideration every student's needs.

Sincerely,

Semaiah Luma

Baltimore City Public Schools student at Western High