



## **HB0575 – Public Schools – Students Attendance – Excused Absences for Civic Engagement**

**Position: Favorable**

**February 18, 2026**

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland’s education system, **offers informational testimony on HB0575 – Public Schools – Students Attendance – Excused Absences for Civic Engagement.** MAREE does not think that civic engagement, or internships, or experiential learning should be considered an absence. Real world engagement opportunities that contribute to growth and learning should be classified as field trips.

I am aware that Attendance Works, a member of the MAREE coalition and nationally sought out experts on attendance have submitted informational testimony. MAREE agrees with Attendance Works analysis of HB0575. We value student civic engagement and as a coalition. We offer opportunities to include students in our advocacy and policy work and to be led by students.

MAREE is advocating for the modernization of excused versus unexcused absences. Also, we advocate for establishing parity in student experience by updating Maryland laws and regulations as well as district policies. Across the state, ensure there is a common approach to determining what constitutes an excused absence when documentation should be submitted and what are the consequences of absence.

MAREE is available to discuss this bill and how we can support in a revision of this bill.

peace & truth,  
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