

Written Testimony in Support of SB720

Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 26, 2026

Submitted by: Jacob Searle, Student, Calvert High School

Position: FAVORABLE

Contact: jacob@lamancha.ai

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jacob Searle. I am an 11th grade student at Calvert High School in Calvert County, Maryland. I have cerebral palsy and am approximately 90% non-verbal. I use an iPad to communicate, and artificial intelligence tools, especially ChatGPT are written into my Individualized Education Program (IEP as assistive technology.

I strongly support SB720.

For me, AI is not a trend or a tool to cheat. It is access and accessibility.

AI allows me to keep up with course material. I can organize my thoughts for essays. I can communicate complex ideas that would otherwise be extremely difficult or impossible for me to express.

I also use AI outside the classroom. I built my own Etsy store with help from ChatGPT. I created a campaign website for a friend. I use AI daily for schoolwork, communication, and creative projects. These experiences have shown me that AI is not just about homework — it is about independence, confidence, and opportunity — and other students should have the resources and the means to learn that for themselves.

Most importantly, AI acts as an equalizer for me. It opens doors that my disability would otherwise close.

Yet despite how widely students are already using AI, many schools lack clear policies or guidance. As a student, this creates confusion and anxiety. Different teachers have different expectations. Some view AI only through the lens of academic dishonesty, without recognizing its role as assistive technology. Students are left guessing what is allowed, and students with disabilities risk losing access to tools they rely on.

That uncertainty should not exist.

SB720 provides exactly what schools need right now: structure, consistency, and accountability. By requiring districts to adopt AI policies, designate AI coordinators, provide professional development for teachers, and establish clear guidelines centered on students, this bill ensures that AI is introduced thoughtfully and responsibly.

For students like me, this matters deeply.

I do not want accessibility tools treated as shortcuts. I do not want students disciplined under unclear or unwritten rules. I do not want families left to individually advocate for accommodations that should already be understood and supported system-wide — and I can't just sit by and let the contrary scenario happen.

My spoken testimony to this Committee is being delivered through an AI-generated voice. That is not symbolic. That is reality. **My voice in this room exists because of artificial intelligence.**

SB720 helps ensure that students like me are supported instead of sidelined, empowered instead of restricted, and included in the future that is already arriving.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB720.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacob A. Searle

11th Grade, Calvert High School

Calvert County, Maryland

jacob@lamancha.ai