

**Claire Cabral**  
Co-Founder

**SafeSchools USA**

**"Safer Schools Start With You"**



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Co-Founder

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**TO:** Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

**RE:** House Bill 568 – Education – Student Organized Peaceful Demonstrations  
– Student Discipline and Policy

**POSITION:** Favorable

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Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

SafeSchools USA is a student-led and organized community organization, recognized primarily for its national presence and leadership in the training of educators, school resource officers, and other school safety stakeholders in the fields of school safety, school security, trends in student behavior, and student advocacy. It is as the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the organization that I write to you, in absolute favor of HB 568.

A core component of a student's social studies curriculum is civic engagement and taking a political stance for wrongdoing. We highlight this by teaching students about the influential work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Susan B. Anthony, and other leaders in American and global history.

HB 568 takes this education one step further by allowing our students to take what they have learned, and actually *act on it*. In other words, this bill ensures that our students have avenues to make their voices heard, when those who should be listening are not.

Many of the members of this committee may recall House Bill 629 from the 2021 session, which set out to take away the voting rights of certain Student Members on Boards of Education (SMOBS) across the State, and thereby inhibiting the student voice. Very luckily for our students, this committee issued an unfavorable report on the bill, allowing the student voice to persevere. However, back in 2021, a student could not lead a peaceful demonstration about the absurdity of this bill to make sure that the message was heard far and wide, and most importantly, *at school*.

In summation, House Bill 568 ensures that we give students room to "practice what we preach" when it comes to self-advocating, while also designating appropriate limitations to ensure that peaceful demonstrations remain peaceful.

It is for these reasons that I urge this committee to produce a favorable report on House Bill 569.

Most Respectfully,



Henry J. Meiser  
*Co-Founder* | SafeSchools USA  
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