

WES MOORE, Governor
ARUNA MILLER, Lieutenant Governor
PAUL MONTEIRO, Secretary
SARAH FLAMMANG, Deputy Secretary



Maryland
Department of Service and Civic Innovation

January 29, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the Honorable members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

The Department of Service and Civic Innovation respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 8 Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established.

SB 8, the Maryland Excellence Program, would provide a vital framework for recognizing and promoting civic education in our public schools. By establishing a voluntary program encouraging participation, SB 8 empowers local school systems to prioritize civic education and engagement initiatives tailored to their unique communities.

The Department acknowledges that service is a nonpartisan strategy that helps bring people together across lines of difference. By promoting these values to young people, they can develop and incorporate them into their personal and professional lives as they grow into future community leaders. HB 72 creates a tangible incentive for students and schools to actively engage in civic learning and service by awarding the Seal of Civic Excellence to qualifying students and naming exemplary schools as Centers of Civic Excellence.

In addition, the criteria outlined in SB 8 ensure that program participation is meaningful and impactful. From requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in key social studies courses to engaging in service learning projects focused on community and civic engagement, the program sets high standards that will undoubtedly contribute to developing informed, engaged citizens.

The Department of Service and Civic Innovation respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 8 and its vision for advancing civic education and engagement in Maryland. By investing in our students and empowering our schools to prioritize civic learning, we are laying the foundation for young Marylanders to contribute positively to their communities.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Meghan Music, Legislative Civic Innovation Specialist.

Yours in Service,

Paul Monteiro

Secretary, Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation