

Good Afternoon, Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Will Andrione. I am a junior at Severna Park High School in Anne Arundel County and am here today to support Senate Bill 0008. A bill that will:

- Allow students to engage in civic activities as well as education more deeply
- Highlight the importance of and encourage staying informed on policy and issues on the local, state, and national level
- Create a standard for schools to incorporate more civic education for their students

As the Civic Engagement Coordinator for CRASC, Anne Arundel County's' county-wide student government, and a Local Policy Director for the American Youth Association, I see firsthand the importance of civics in shaping an engaged and active youth. However, I also see how much we lack in youth civic engagement.

By offering extrinsic incentives, that being the 'Seal of Civic Excellence,' this bill will encourage students to explore civics and service, often sparking a lifelong passion for community engagement.

I know this first hand; my first step into civics was with the 2024 Primary elections as an election judge, with my extrinsic motivation being the judges' paycheck. Learning about the candidates and meeting and connecting with individuals already enshrined in civic engagement made something click with me. That extrinsic motivation turned into a passion. I am passionate about civics, engaging my community, and staying informed in local, state, and national politics.

I have seen that this motivation turned passion is not an isolated situation. When we give students and youth a reason to want to start engaging in civics, we have seen and will continue to see students deepen their involvement.

If you want to create a new generation of leaders and students to engage in their communities, it starts with Senate Bill 08. A vote for Senate Bill 08 is a vote to empower our students, inspire civics in schools... and invest in the future leaders of our community, state... and nation.

Thank you for your time.