

Written Testimony In Favor of HB192 - Brian Kramer

Dear Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Brian Kramer, and I am **writing to support HB192 and advocate for expanded voting rights for the Baltimore County student school board member (SMOB.)** I am a Montgomery County resident with a background in education advocacy while I attended high school, including running for SMOB and running the SMOB election process in 2019. Helping facilitate a process to represent students at the table is one of the most fulfilling things I have done so far, and I have not stopped being an advocate for student school board members since.

Maryland is well known for having student school board members, with most counties in the state at least having a student at the board meeting table. Many counties, including Baltimore County, have given this student some voting rights to allow student input on issues impacting students every day. This unique feature of our education system in Maryland allows for student voices to be heard on a variety of issues that many adult school board members may not have known to advocate for. In MoCo, our SMOBs have been exemplary advocates for infrastructure improvements and for ensuring resources are distributed equitably across the county.

HB192 would allow the Baltimore County SMOB to have a vote on the capital and operating budgets for Baltimore County Public Schools. When students advocate for their communities, their greatest ally is often the SMOB, who have proven time and time again that they are prepared for the responsibility of helping to craft the annual budgets. After all, these budgets are going to directly impact them and the communities they serve, as they are students themselves. SMOBs not only know the impact that a budget can have, they are ready to engage students in the process and are a tremendous asset to any school board that has them.

By giving HB192 a favorable report, this committee will help ensure that Baltimore County students are given a seat at the table in the most important decisions made by the school board. By listening to the greatest stakeholders of schools, our students themselves, we can have better budgets that serve our students best. This committee has advocated for SMOBs time and time again, and I hope to see that trend continue by allowing HB192 to pass this session.

Thank you for your time and your consideration. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. My email is bk3234a@student.american.edu, and I am always eager to discuss the importance of student school board members!

Kind regards,
Brian Kramer

Figure 1: Current SMOB Voting Rights

