



Loudoun County Public Schools Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2024

ASHBURN, Va. - On Tuesday, February 27, a group of 7th-grade students from Farmwell Station Middle School testified to the House of Delegates Subcommittee on K-12 Education, which includes former LCPS School Board member Delegate Atoosa Reaser. Advocating on their own behalf, as well as that of other students around the commonwealth, students testified virtually from the Farmwell Station library. The students have spearheaded an effort to change the Code of Virginia to allow middle and high school students to have career and technical education clubs at their schools.

Student Liam Gandhi and his friends wanted to start a club that allowed them to pursue their passion for the medical sciences. Many of the students have doctors, nurses or scientists in their families and wish to pursue careers in the medical field. Sherryl Loya, the principal of Farmwell Station Middle School, supported the idea and the club began to meet regularly with guest speakers. As interest in the club grew, Liam and his classmates applied to be a chapter of the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). HOSA provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation, and recognition exclusively for secondary, postsecondary, middle school, adult, and collegiate students enrolled in health science education and biomedical science programs or who have interests in pursuing careers in health professions.

The Club's application to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) was denied because Farmwell Station Middle School does not offer classes in the medical sciences. The students, feeling the rule was rather "arbitrary," reached out to their legislative representative, Senator Suhas Subramanyam. Agreeing with the students, Senator Subramanyam authored [Senate Bill 707](#). If passed, the bill will permit public middle and high schools to establish career and technical education student organizations, regardless of whether such school offers career and technical education courses.

Liam testified in front of the Senate, and the bill passed with unanimous support. "I have learned that if you put your sights on something and work hard to achieve it, you can do it," Liam said.

Delegate Reaser said, “Listening to Loudoun County Public Schools students engage with lawmakers, especially in an area that will benefit workforce development, made me proud. LCPS has a long track record of elevating student voices, and their civic engagement was very effective. I congratulate the students on the success of the bill!”

The bill has now passed both the House and Senate and awaits the Governor’s signature.

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