

HOUSE BILL 793

F1

2lr1365

By: **Delegate Lisanti**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2022

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Community Ombudsman – Established**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring each county board of education to designate a community
4 ombudsman; requiring the community ombudsman to take certain actions; providing
5 for the confidentiality of certain communications under certain circumstances; and
6 generally relating to community ombudsmen in public schools.

7 BY adding to

8 Article – Education

9 Section 4–141

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
13 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article – Education**

15 **4–141.**

16 **(A) (1) BEFORE THE 2022–2023 SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS, EACH COUNTY**
17 **BOARD SHALL DESIGNATE A COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN TO SERVE IN THE SCHOOL**
18 **DISTRICT.**

19 **(2) THE COUNTY BOARD MAY:**

20 **(i) DESIGNATE THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN FROM EXISTING**
21 **PERSONNEL WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT; OR**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **(II) HIRE AN INDIVIDUAL TO BE THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN**
2 **USING EXISTING FUNDS.**

3 **(B) (1) THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN IS TO PROVIDE**
4 **ASSISTANCE, AS A NEUTRAL PARTY, TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF STUDENTS**
5 **AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL**
6 **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**

7 **(2) THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN SHALL:**

8 **(I) RESEARCH APPLICABLE SCHOOL SYSTEM INFORMATION,**
9 **INCLUDING COUNTY BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES;**

10 **(II) REFER INDIVIDUALS TO THE APPROPRIATE SCHOOL**
11 **SYSTEM DEPARTMENT OR PERSONNEL OR OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES;**

12 **(III) ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH ANY ESTABLISHED LOCAL**
13 **PROCESSES FOR RESOLVING ISSUES;**

14 **(IV) AS NEEDED, FACILITATE COMMUNICATION AND**
15 **DISCUSSION BETWEEN PARTIES; AND**

16 **(V) PERFORM ANY OTHER SERVICE THAT ALIGNS WITH THE**
17 **PURPOSE OF AN OMBUDSMAN.**

18 **(C) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ON OR**
19 **BEFORE AUGUST 1 EACH YEAR, THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN SHALL SUBMIT A**
20 **REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD DESCRIBING THE SERVICES PROVIDED DURING**
21 **THE PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR.**

22 **(2) A REPORT OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY**
23 **OMBUDSMAN MAY NOT DISCLOSE THE IDENTITY OF ANY INDIVIDUALS WHO**
24 **RECEIVED SERVICES.**

25 **(D) UNLESS DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL,**
26 **STATE, OR LOCAL LAW, ANY COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A COMMUNITY**
27 **OMBUDSMAN AND AN INDIVIDUAL SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM THE COMMUNITY**
28 **OMBUDSMAN SHALL BE CONFIDENTIAL.**

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
30 1, 2022.