

Jeffrey Freedman
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BILL: SB 1055/HB 1633

TITLE: Baltimore County Board of Education - Election of Officers

DATE: March 10, 2020

POSITION: OPPOSE

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

As a veteran educator of 13 years, I am testifying in writing concerning my **strong opposition** to this bill.

We in Baltimore County have finally been fortunate to have adopted a hybrid school board. This means that we have the ability to vote for the majority of the members of the board and that these people are accountable to the parents, teachers, students, and community when making decisions for Baltimore County Public Schools. We finally have a school board that has been listening and has been making decisions in the best interest of all stakeholders in the county. I strongly believe in the community process involved with this hybrid board.

While there are currently only 11 board members due to a vacancy from the passing of one member, that number will soon again become 12 members with the appointment of a new at-large member. This means that 7 votes would still be required under this bill, nullifying the need for this bill to be considered.

According to Maryland State Board of Education procedures, if no candidate for board chair or vice chair receives the required 7 votes, the current chair and co-chair will remain in place until there are 7 votes for these positions.

Changing this procedure for chair and co-chair would create a bad precedent because it would remove the board's authority to make a decision in the best interest of the community as a whole in the way it is able to do so for all other matters that involve our school system. With fewer than 7 votes required, it is likely that not all viewpoints from our elected members would be considered when making this important decision. This democratic process was directed and confirmed again by the Maryland State Board of Education and respects what we need in our county.

By voting to support this bill, you are taking away the power of the citizens and members of the school system to make an important decision that affects what is best for our schools, and this decision strongly impacts Baltimore County parents, teachers, students, and community members. This decision should be left up to those who this affects, not the legislature in Annapolis.

Lastly, it is WRONG for the Annapolis legislature to interfere with the authority of the Board of Education. We elected the majority of the board members and we trust them to make the appropriate decisions for BCPS. It is important that you respect our need for local control so that our schools can be the best they can be.

Please respect the State Board's findings and allow our school board to exercise its authority to do what we trust them to do.

I would appreciate your serious consideration in voting AGAINST this bill!

Jeffrey Freedman
BCPS Teacher