



Vice Chair  
Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

Joint Audit Committee  
Joint Committee on Federal Relations

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SB644: State Officials - Appointments - Advice and Consent of the Senate**  
**Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee | Wednesday, March 3, 2021**

Cabinet secretaries serve at the pleasure of the Governor and do not have a “performance review” after their initial appointment. They serve after being interviewed by the Executive Nominations Committee and approved by the full Senate. Regardless of their qualifications, they may not be sufficiently responsive, thoughtful, or collaborative. Additionally, to “serve at the pleasure of the Governor” could mean a tenure of **up to 8 years**.

There are other key agency positions that also lack oversight and accountability. Two examples are the State Administrator for the State Board of Elections (SBE) and the State Superintendent of Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) do not have to appear before the Executive Nominations Committee at all-- whether for initial appointment or any type of “check-in.”

**Beginning on January 1, 2023 (the next Governor), [SB644](#) would require reappointment for:**

- Cabinet Secretaries at the start of a Governor’s second term;
- State Administrator of Elections every 5 years; and
- State Superintendent of Schools every 4 years.

A typical employee meets with a supervisor for a yearly evaluation. Members of the General Assembly and local offices are “reviewed” every four years at the ballot box. Bringing appointees before the Senate after four (or five for SBE) years will ensure that once appointed gives the legislature the opportunity for more accountability.

This concept is not new-- similar legislation ([SB1075](#) - Sens. Miller/Frosh) was introduced in 2006 to require reappointment for cabinet secretaries when a Governor is elected for a second term. Additionally, [Sen. Simonaire introduced SB221](#) in 2018, which would have required a term limit and reappointment for the State Administrator of Elections. SB644 combines these past efforts to provide needed oversight.

**I urge a favorable report of SB644.**