



Olivia Bartlett, Co-Lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

TESTIMONY ON: HB0541/MC 01–21- Montgomery County – Residential Property Sales – School District Information

POSITION: FAVORABLE

HEARING DATE: February 16, 2021

BILL SPONSORS: Montgomery County Delegation

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all the members of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment, uplift all members of our communities, and promote equity across all our communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0541 because it will help Montgomery County home buyers understand that school boundaries necessarily may be adjusted periodically based on school enrollments and school capacities.

HB0541 simply says that a contract of sale for single–family residential real property in Montgomery County shall include a notice that school boundaries designated for the property may be subject to change.

Many homes in Montgomery County have been in the same school district for years just because the last time there was a comprehensive boundary study was in the 1980's. However, the 2019-2020 Montgomery County Public Schools At A Glance Report (<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/glance/currentyear/SAG2020.pdf>) shows that there is a wide disparity in how full schools are across the County. For example, some Montgomery County elementary schools are 100–150 students below capacity while nearby schools are 200-250 students over capacity with 8 portable trailer classrooms. The same pattern exists in the 40 Montgomery County middle schools and the 16 Montgomery County high schools. The high school closest to my home already has six portable trailer classrooms and is projected to be more than 800 students over capacity by the 2023-2024 school year, while other nearby high schools will continue to be significantly under capacity.

This is an unacceptable and unfair situation for students, teachers and staff. We clearly have facilities that could be used more efficiently, and be better for students, if school boundaries were adjusted. Some of the current school boundaries also keep certain schools in higher concentrations of poverty than neighboring schools.

A new school boundary study will have a final report released this spring. Two new high schools will also be built in the County, but residents in some neighborhoods have already

started asking not to be assigned to them five or more years before they're even built. They claim that they bought their house for their current school and even a new school just built won't be acceptable. This is ridiculous. Residents buy a house, not a school. HB0541 will help Montgomery County home buyers understand that.

Therefore, DoTheMostGood strongly recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0541.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
Co-lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
oliviabartlett@verizon.net
240-751-5599