

Written Testimony of Lauren Tigie Meredith, Baltimore County Resident, Baltimore County Board of Education - Alterations of Elected Member Districts and Establishment of Redistricting Process

Chairwomen Atterbeary, and Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the committee,

My name is Lauren Tigie Meredith, I'm a resident of District 11B, I'm a mother of two Baltimore County Public School children, and a proud product of public education. I am writing to support SB 0656/HB 1529. As a leader of mentoring programs working in partnership with Baltimore County high schools, I have experienced how representation can positively impact policies and procedures while improving student outcomes.

Attending school board meetings, I feel our hybrid board lends expertise, knowledge, and a neutral lens to many topics addressed by the Baltimore County Board of Education. While our elected officials provide the voice of residents our appointed members bring a diverse range of experiences and skills to complement our elected officials. Appointments to the board ensure the board is as diverse as the public it's intended to serve!

By using census data this bill helps ensure our school board can respond to population shifts and growth. Using a framework that was vetted, debated, and adopted by Montgomery County allows Baltimore County to confidently move forward with this model. Montgomery County is the largest school system in Maryland with a diverse student body. Montgomery County is a leader in public education and used for benchmarking data and outcomes. It is responsible and efficient leadership for Baltimore County to look to this established framework as a viable solution.

Further, as we see school boards across our country become over-politized and at times more focused on politics than the actual work of county government I'm urging Delegates to vote yes for SB0656/HB 1529. With nine county council districts and seven school board districts, this bill facilitates collaboration and communication at the local level. Our school board officials run as non-partisan, and as such, can partner with multiple county council officials to better serve our schools, students, and parents. This type of relationship-building furthers collaboration, consensus, and innovation, and strengthens our local official's ability to find solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lauren Tigue Meredith