

SUPPORT - HB1060  
Charles County - Board of Education - Membership Alterations

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB1060 - Charles County - Board of Education - Membership Alterations. I believe the proposed changes to how members of our Board of Education are elected are long past due and appreciate their introduction by Delegate Patterson.

Charles County is a beautiful and also diverse county. Some might consider us rural, others solidly suburban. This is because you can be driving among farm land then shopping at a strip mall within a few minutes. With these diverse differences, there are specialized needs. The far-reaching corners of the county still lack reliable internet connections, many of our neighborhoods in Waldorf are considered low-income and their schools are designated as requiring Title 1 funding. No year has presented the challenges to represent such a diverse county as this than the ongoing saga of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, the 7 voting members of our Board of Education have ignored the plight of families in our most vulnerable and underserved communities. Parents begging for a return to in-person learning were denied proper representation and forced into further despair by the continued tyranny of the current Board of Education. The families of Charles County would be better served by members who are elected out of their districts, to be a voice for the stakeholders in their own neighborhoods.

Additionally, in a year when students are really falling into despair being kept out of their schools and classrooms, the voice of the Student Member of the Charles County Board of Education has been one of the most reasonable and powerful. However, as a non-voting member, he was unable to prevail in his valiant attempts to convince the adults in the room to remember the interests of students in their decision-making. I believe making the student member a *voting* member would be a positive change for the governance of our school system.

I am often not on the same ideological side as Delegate Patterson, but I respect her immensely for how responsive she is to the needs of *all* her constituents, not just those with the same political allegiance. I believe she does that because she really believes in the importance of being a representative of her district. This same principle of representing a district and not an agenda should be reflected in our school board. I urge you to give a favorable report to HB1060, which would make our Board of Education accountable to the voters in the district in which they reside, give a consequential voice to the student member, and enact term limits to encourage new leadership to emerge over time.

Sincerely,

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