



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB1207 - MONTGOMERY COUNTY - BOARD OF EDUCATION - COMPENSATION MC 7-25

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

APRIL 1ST, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

As Maryland's largest school district, Montgomery County has a significant workload for its Board of Education (BOE). With 211 schools and 159,671 students (as of September, 2024)¹, it is important that our board members can dedicate their time to running the school system effectively and to the maximum benefit of our students, staff, and families. In recent years the challenges have grown.

The Montgomery County Board of Education (MC BOE) includes a Student Member of the Board (SMOB). In Montgomery County, the SMOB has full voting rights, and is responsible for voting on the same issues as the seven adult, non-student members of the BOE—excepting only negative personnel actions. The SMOB has a unique responsibility—to represent the views and concerns of Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) students—and unique challenges—to balance schoolwork with demanding MC BOE duties that may equal those of a full-time job. In recognition of the significant commitment of time and significant responsibilities required of all full voting members of the BOE, since 2016, at the end of their term, the SMOB has received a college scholarship, currently worth \$25,000.

The SMOB is an essential member of the MC BOE who is also a full-time student. Hence, a student member of the BOE will find it all but impossible to hold after school or part-time employment. As a result of the demands, many capable and interested students do not seek election to the BOE; many district students provide essential, regular financial contributions to their families and cannot sacrifice part-time employment in order to serve on the BOE. In addition, while not all potential SMOBs may choose to pursue higher education, the current compensation only rewards those SMOBs who do. HB1207 will address these shortcomings in current SMOB compensation. HB1207 will allow the SMOB to elect to receive the value of the SMOB scholarship as a monthly stipend, as an end-of-term scholarship, or as a combination of the two. In all cases, SMOB compensation may not exceed the salary of the non-student members of the BOE. This approach to student member compensation will create a more equitable approach to compensation for the SMOB and enable students with family financial responsibilities to participate. SMOB may also be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with official duties.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1207.