



TESTIMONY FOR SB0099

Open Meetings Act – County Boards of Education – Enhanced Requirements (Local Boards of Education Transparency Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Rebecca Turner

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0099 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

One of the newest fronts in the culture wars in this country is education. There are several areas of contention that affect how our children learn and interact with others that have caused incredible dismay among parents – banning of books; teaching of history; allowing transgender students use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity; and allowing transgender students to play sports with other students of the gender they identify with.

As a result, decisions of the Board of Education have become contentious along with the meetings themselves. It is imperative that parents and students are able to stay abreast of these meetings. This bill, if enacted, would require county Boards of Education publish the agenda, minutes of the meeting, and live video streaming of each portion of a meeting held in open session on their website and maintain them in an archive on the website for 5 years.

Our members feel that this is important not only as a record of how decisions changed over time, and what the issues were, but as a means for staying involved for parents and students who cannot attend the meetings.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.