

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 815 (Delegate Hornberger)  
Government, Labor, and Elections

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Cecil County - County Council and Board of Education Elections - Single-Member Districts

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This bill proposes a constitutional amendment that, if approved by the voters at the next general election, requires, beginning in 2032, that the election of a member of the Cecil County Council to represent a specific residency district be decided by a plurality of the votes cast within that district. The bill also, in statute, requires that the election of a voting member of the Cecil County Board of Education, from a county council residency district, be decided by a plurality of the votes cast within the district. **The bill's board of education provisions take effect October 1, 2031.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not expected to have a direct, material impact on Cecil County finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:**

*Cecil County Council*

Maryland counties operate under three forms of government: commission, charter home rule, and code home rule. To date, only 6 counties continue to operate under the

commission, or nonhome rule, form of government, while 11 counties, and Baltimore City, operate under charter home rule and 6 counties operate under code home rule. Each of the 11 counties that ratified the charter home rule form of government are governed by county councils; and all but Dorchester and Talbot counties have county executives. **Exhibit 1** shows the form of government for each Maryland county and the year in which local home rule became effective.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Forms of County Governments in Maryland**

<u>Charter Home Rule</u>		<u>Code Home Rule</u>		<u>Commission</u>
Anne Arundel	1964	Allegany	1974	Calvert
Baltimore City	1918	Caroline	1984	Carroll
Baltimore	1956	Charles	2002	Garrett
Cecil	2012	Kent	1970	St. Mary's
Dorchester	2002	Queen Anne's	1990	Somerset
Frederick	2014	Worcester	1976	Washington
Harford	1972			
Howard	1968			
Montgomery	1948			
Prince George's	1970			
Talbot	1973			
Wicomico	1964			

Source: Department of Legislative Services

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Cecil County transitioned from a commission form of government to a charter home rule form of government in 2012. Its legislative body, the Cecil County Council, consists of five members elected at-large (by the voters of the county as a whole) to staggered four-year terms, from five residency districts (a candidate must have lived in a district for at least six months immediately preceding election from the district).

*Cecil County Board of Education*

The Cecil County Board of Education consists of five voting members elected from each of the five councilmanic (residency) districts and one nonvoting student member. A member elected from a district must be a resident of the district. The board members are elected to staggered four-year terms, with certain members elected during the presidential elections and certain members during the gubernatorial elections. The board is 1 of 20 elected school boards in the State. Four counties have combined appointed and elected school boards.

**Additional Comments:** Section 3-4A-01 of the Education Article, which is modified by the bill, currently refers to Cecil County Board of Education members being elected from commissioner districts; however, transitional provisions of the Cecil County Charter indicate that all references in the Maryland Constitution and State law to the Cecil County Commissioners must be construed, at the effective date of the charter (December 3, 2012), to refer to the council and/or the county executive whenever the construction would be reasonable. In addition, the State Board of Elections' website [indicates](#) that Cecil County Board of Education candidates are elected from the councilmanic districts.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Cecil County; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 18, 2026  
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