



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 1028**

**DATE: March 6, 2020**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Queen, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Ways and Means**

**CONTACT PERSON: Amy Samman (amy.samman@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: Support**

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### **Public and Nonpublic Schools – Electric Retractable Room Partitions – Model Safety Guidelines and Local Law**

House Bill 1028 authorizes a county to enact a local law to: (1) prohibit public and nonpublic school employees from operating electric retractable room partitions under specified circumstances; and (2) require that any annual safety review, evaluation, or exercise must include information and demonstrations regarding the safe operation of an electric retractable room partition. Additionally, the Maryland State Department of Education must develop and disseminate model safety guidelines to each local school board

Montgomery County supports House Bill 1028 because there have been several child fatalities involving electronic room partitions in the last few decades, with one occurring in Fairfax County last year. In 2019, Virginia enacted a similar law prohibiting operation of electronic room partitions in public schools unless: (1) no student is present in the building; (2) no student is present in the room where the partition is located and the room is locked and inaccessible to students; or (3) the partition includes a safety sensor that automatically stops the partition if a person crosses the plane between the partitioned rooms. New York state enacted a similar law in 2001 but included all nonpublic schools and educational institutions as well.

For the foregoing reasons Montgomery County respectfully requests a favorable Committee report on House Bill 1028.