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TESTIMONY OF BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCILMAN DAVID MARKS
SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SB 468
FEBRUARY 9, 2021

I would like to thank Senator Chris West for his sponsorship of this legislation, and thank the members of the committee for their consideration.

This legislation would allow the Baltimore County Council to increase oversight of the Baltimore County Public School system. Currently, the County Council cannot set conditions or restrictions on spending. The Council can only cut, which is sometimes an unwieldy way to exert influence.

BCPS funding constitutes more than 50 percent of county funding. Over the past decade, we have seen many times when it may have been useful for the County Council to set conditions on spending. For example, many parents and community leaders would have liked better oversight of spending on technology when a previous Superintendent supported the purchase of tens of thousands on laptop computers. It is also very difficult to get answers on such basic information as student residency or discipline. Recently, the County Council received almost no information on the ransomware attack even though we are the funding authority.

I believe this legislation, along with the proposal to allow broader power for our Inspector General, can greatly improve oversight of this critical function of government.