

Letter in Support of HOUSE BILL 468

Dear Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of Ways and Means,

My name is Julie Sugar and I represent the League of Women Voters of Baltimore County on the Baltimore County School Board Nominating Commission (BCSBNC). I am writing to express my wholehearted support for HB468. Although I do not speak for the Commission, I am writing to share that I believe this bill will assist our Commission in shortening the amount of time it takes to select replacement nominees for the Baltimore County Board of Education.

When BoE At-Large appointee Roger Hayden died in October 2019, the BCSBNC had the task of following the lengthy process of advertising and interviewing for his replacement. Time was of the essence in finding a replacement for Mr. Hayden because the School Board was in the process of selecting a new Chair and was deadlocked without a replacement for Mr. Hayden to break the near-tie.

Although finding replacement nominees sounds like it should be a quick task, it ended up taking 5 months due to the way the current law is written. We found ourselves having to follow all the steps required when selecting a full set of At-Large nominees which includes holding 3 public meetings all over the County which takes time to locate, schedule, advertise, staff, and hold. The new bill requires only one public meeting to share information with the public about the application process, which can be held at the BCPS headquarters, livestreamed and available for viewing online at a later date. In my view, this will definitely assist in streamlining the BCSBNC process.

The ability to go back to previously vetted candidates who were recently submitted to the Governor's appointment office, and ask if they would be interested in being re-submitted should also help to not only streamline the process but also ensure great candidates are not lost to us. For example, when we were initially tasked with selecting nominees for 4 At-Large positions, we submitted 9 excellent candidates and only 4 could be selected. The other 5 candidates, although excellent and already vetted through the laborious vetting process, did not re-apply and there was no mechanism to go back to them to encourage them to re-apply. This bill would allow the BCSBNC to ask them if they would like to be considered for the new opening without going through the lengthy application and interview process which may make them more likely to be interested in the new opening.

Thank you for your consideration,

Julie Sugar

League of Women Voters of Baltimore County, Education Committee Member

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