

The Honorable Kathy Klausmeier
The Honorable Charles Sydnor
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Klausmeier and Senator Sydnor:

I am Cheryl E. Pasteur, and I express my support for SB 055 on my own accord, having no connection with my former role as a member of the Baltimore County Board of Education (BOE). The Board of Education in Baltimore County carries the unfortunate distinction of being the only board in the State where the hiring of legal counsel falls under the auspices of its county. If the negative impact of this fact were unclear prior to last year, certainly an observer would attest that this control created a road block for the Board when seeking new counsel. The BOE had to expend unbudgeted funds to retain interim counsel while awaiting a lengthy County process. This Senate bill will expedite matters because it will be a singular task for the Board if there is a need to hire counsel.

Senator Sydnor's bill expands the authority of the Baltimore County Board to hire its own counsel to serve the School Board at meetings and when requiring representation in legal matters affecting the Board. As the law currently stands, the board may only retain counsel in legal matters involving disputes with the county government. If the board retains counsel, it will contract for a "reasonable" fee for services, with funds for legal counsel being provided in the annual budget of the Board. For better management of legal services, I am hopeful that this bill passes!

Sincerely,

Cheryl E. Pasteur