

Ryan Burbey Testimony in Opposition to HB 603
Harford County Board of Education - Appointment of Members - Alterations
Ways and Means Committee
March 29, 2022

House Bill 603 will completely undermine the financial security, programmatic integrity and educational outcomes of Harford County Public Schools. No school system in the state of Maryland has a more prodigious history of underfunding than Harford County Public Schools. HCPS routinely ranks at the bottom of total funding. Every County Executive in modern history with the exception of Mr. Glassman, has underfunded our schools to the point of collapse. This pattern of underfunding has resulted in inequitable educational outcomes and opportunities for poor and minority students within our county. One need only view the current physical plants of our schools to see that the more affluent neighborhoods receive attention while the less affluent neighborhoods are neglected. If the County Executive is permitted to appoint members of the Board of Education, they will undoubtedly be his emissaries; abandoning the responsibilities of their position to cut the budget rather than promote the well-being of our students. This politicization of our Board of Education will also result in the further disenfranchisement of poor and minority community members and students. A cursory glance at the current county redistricting maps and the County Council's failure to follow our charter will illuminate the clear partisan, bigoted and classist disenfranchisement which is at play in Harford County. When the current likely winners of the County Executive race are considered, it becomes stunningly clear that the changes proposed by this legislation will have a detrimental effect on all students within HCPS but most profoundly upon our minority and poor students.

William Boniface has worked in Harford County Government for most of his adult life. During his tenure on the County Council, he repeatedly failed to fund the budget request by our Board of Education while at the same time cutting revenues and reallocating funds to special interest groups which align with him politically. He spent most of his time as County Council President, reviling teachers and their union while our salaries were frozen over and over. His poor decision making caused a flood of teachers to leave our county, as well as, necessitated massive staffing cuts. Under his tenure, Harford County built jails rather than schools and funded agricultural land buys rather than school infrastructure. If he is permitted to appoint members of the Board of Education following the elections in November, our schools will be subjected to austerity which will destroy any sense of equity or equitable education. You can view his education policy [here](#). Please peruse his campaign page for more of his wrong-headed ideas about education.

Bob Cassilly voted against every single education funding bill which has been proposed during his tenure in the MD Senate. Anyone who has listened to him speak or had a short conversation with him has heard his bigoted view about Baltimore City and Baltimore City Schools. Why would anyone believe that he would not appoint agents to the Board of Education who will carry out his despotic policy doctrines and ideals. Please view his campaign page [here](#)..

The current format for appointment of Board of Education Members by the Governor has served Harford County and Harford County Public Schools well. Even the members appointed by the most conservative Governors have provided a sense of stability and have carried out their duties relatively free of political rancor. The same cannot be said for the current candidates in Harford County Board of Education Races. Currently, there are two races with unopposed candidates running on radical fringe platforms. In District E, an anti-Semite under who's leadership, The Harford County Young Republicans were disbanded is running without opposition. If elected, he will represent Aberdeen, the largest city in Harford County. In District B, the candidate organized board of education protests which embraced the Proud Boys. Passing this legislation would be akin to the Supreme Court's dismantling of the voting rights act. No district in MD has been sued for civil rights violations more by the ACLU and the Department of Justice than Harford County. The Maryland State Legislature cannot allow our children's futures to be in the hands of bigoted political fringe groups. We need the external oversight provided by gubernatorial appointments to preserve and equitable education nor all our students. The Maryland Constitution guarantees an well-funded, equitable education for all children. Passage of this legislation will undermine any sense of educational equity within Harford County Public Schools. For all these reasons, I beg you to issue an unfavorable report and stop this destructive legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Burbey', is written over a horizontal line.

Ryan Burbey