



**Testimony in opposition to
House Bill 740: Education - Accountability and Implementation Board -
Membership**

**Ways and Means Committee
Position: Oppose**

February 22, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We advocate for legislative and regulatory policy changes to further educational equity and build the technical capacity of everyday Marylanders to hold state and local officials accountable to their responsibilities. **Strong Schools Maryland urges a unfavorable vote on House Bill 740: Education - Accountability and Implementation Board - Membership.**

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state's students. A key pillar of this vision is a strong system of accountability to keep all entities integral to the education system accountable during the implementation process. The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) functions as a crucial agency that holds all state agencies and local governments accountable for implementing the Blueprint and outcomes. This legislation harmfully alters the membership composition of the AIB's governing board.

House Bill 740 would:

- Increase the number of members appointed to the Accountability and Implementation Board from 7 to 11; and

- Require one member from each of the following locations: Southern Maryland, Western Maryland, the Eastern Shore, Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties.

Currently, the board must consist of 7 individuals who collectively “reflect, to the extent practicable, the geographic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of the State” and “have a high level of knowledge and expertise in various education policy areas.”¹ This bill seeks to alter membership of the board on the basis of nothing and will create multiple consequences, most notably the unnecessary politicization of the AIB and emphasis on geography over educational expertise. Existing law does not prohibit any members of the board from any county or region in Maryland to serve on the AIB. In fact, there is currently an [application available](#) to fill a vacancy on the AIB, which is open to anyone in the state to apply. This application has been marketed on multiple state websites, including the [front page](#) of the Maryland General Assembly site.

Accessibility, opportunity, and equal representation are not at risk; however the integrity of the board and its mission to implement the Blueprint with fidelity are at risk when we reconstitute the board based on arbitrary geography, without giving consideration to population – specifically populations that have been historically underserved. We urge this committee not to allow the AIB to turn into a hub of partisan politics. Instead, faithfully uphold the principles of accountability and diverse representation within this entity.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 740.

For more information, contact:

Maddie Long

maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org

¹ [2022 Fiscal and Policy Note](#)