

CHERYL C. KAGAN
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee



Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3134 · 410-841-3134
800-492-7122 Ext. 3134
Fax 301-858-3665 · 410-841-3665
Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us

Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Joint Committee on Federal Relations

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB129: Election Cost-Sharing and More!

Education, Energy, Environment (& Elections!) Committee

March 4, 2024: 1:00 PM

Our State and County Governments share responsibility for administering our elections. [SB129](#), an emergency bill, clarifies cost-sharing for when Statewide uniformity should take precedence over County autonomy. This is beneficial when technical knowledge from the State Board of Elections (SBE) is needed and will save taxpayer money through statewide bulk purchasing. SB129 would also help our Local Boards of Election (LBE) by providing the clarity needed for long-term fiscal planning.

[SB129](#) includes:

- **Defining 50/50 cost-sharing:** The bill clearly itemizes which items are the fiscal responsibility of the SBE, the LBEs, or both:

SBE Only:

- Election management system;
- Ballot drop-off boxes;
- Drafting an election judge recruitment marketing campaign; and
- A statewide Get Out The Vote marketing campaign.

LBE Only:

- Creating and printing sample ballot materials;
- Maintaining the voter registration database;
- Disseminating election judge marketing materials;
- Paying for returning election judges; and
- Security camera installation for dropoff box security.

50/50 Split:

- Electronic poll books;
- Voting machines;
- Ballot marking devices; and
- Pay for new election judges.

- **Increasing procurement transparency:** [Under current law](#), the Board of Public Works (BPW) must approve State contracts over \$200,000. Under this bill, as amended, the bipartisan SBE Board members must approve all proposal requests and contracts **before** they are sent or accepted, respectively, if the total amount of money involved meets or exceeds the current BPW threshold.
- **Improving SBE invoices and billing practices:** In the past, SBE invoices to counties were not itemized; were required to be paid within 30 days; and could have interest rates as high as 17%. Under this bill:
 - All invoices sent to LBEs will be itemized;
 - Invoices must be paid within 90 days; and
 - LBEs will not be charged an interest rate exceeding the current maximum federal funds interest rate.
- **Creating a stipend for SBE members:** Unlike our 24 counties, Board members of the SBE are not paid for their time and expertise. This bill would establish a modest stipend for them, equaling the average pay for members of the 24 LBEs. The current average for local stipends provided to LBE members (not including Board Presidents) is approximately \$4,500. By creating a modest stipend, we could likely attract a more economically diverse Board.
- **Requiring bipartisan ballot retrieval:** SB129 clarifies the “chain of custody” procedures for removal and return of ballots from a drop-off box, requiring the presence of at least two people who are registered with different political parties. SB129 will put into statute this best practice for election security.
- **Amendment:** My proposed amendment would:
 - Require that at least two individuals from two different political parties must be present for the retrieval of materials from a ballot drop-off box;
 - Remove the ability for the SBE to set the amount of their own stipend;
 - Modify the procurement procedure to ensure that the BPW standard for review is applied (instead of a flat \$200,000 as initially drafted); and
 - Define “Election Management System.”

I urge a favorable report on SB129, as amended.

BOARD MEMBER COMPENSATION BY COUNTY

COUNTY	COMPENSATION PER MEMBER, IN \$ PER YEAR	COUNTY	COMPENSATION PER MEMBER, IN \$ PER YEAR
Allegany	4,051	Harford	5,500
Anne Arundel	4,500	Howard	3,000
Baltimore City	10,000	Kent	3,000
Baltimore County	3,000	Montgomery	11,500
Calvert	3,000	Prince George's	4,500
Caroline	3,000	Queen Anne's	3,750
Carroll	4,000	Somerset	1,900
Cecil	3,000	St. Mary's	3,000
Charles	4,000	Talbot	2,580
Dorchester	4,000	Washington	5,000
Frederick	5,500	Wicomico	4,000
Garrett	3,000	Worcester	2,400