

SB 451 Written Testimony in Support of the Bill

Greetings Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee. I am Tiara Booker-Dwyer, Chair of the Baltimore County Board of Education and I am here to express support for SB 451.

Members of the Baltimore County Board of Education are responsible for the governance of the 3rd largest school system in Maryland and the 22nd largest school system in the nation. Our duties require more than just attending a monthly board meeting. A significant amount of time is spent on responsibilities that inform our governance. Some of our duties are listed below.

- a. We visit schools to see what is happening in our schools and to hear directly from school leaders, teachers, students, and staff.
- b. We attend community meetings to hear firsthand from community members about what is working well and what can be improved in our school system.
- c. We engage in professional learning to stay current on governance practices and research that can inform our work.
- d. We review documents, presentations, and other information to prepare for board meetings.
- e. We attend public hearings to inform decisions regarding school boundaries, budgets, and closures.
- f. We render decisions on oral arguments and engage in many other duties to inform governance that improves educational outcomes for our students.

Being a member of the board of education, especially serving as the chair, is equivalent to having a part-time job. The current compensation structure may limit the representation of socio-economically diverse board members as it can be a financial

SB 451 Written Testimony in Support of the Bill

strain for those from low-income households to hold a board seat. SB 451 right sizes the compensation for board service. SB 451 supports increasing board diversity, brings compensation of board members to levels that are comparable to those of similar size school systems, and most importantly it recognizes the amount of time that board members devote to the governance of one of the largest school systems in Maryland.

Thank you Senators Brooks and Hettleman for bringing this very timely and needed bill forward and thank you Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committees for your service.

I am requesting that this Committee move SB 451 forward Favorably.