

Carrington 2024 SB851 HB971 Students playing sport

Uploaded by: Darrell Carrington

Position: FAV



CARRINGTON & ASSOCIATES, LLC
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SB851\HB971 - Public Schools - Interscholastic Athletics - Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification SUPPORT

Carrington & Associates, LLC, in memory of Chris Beisler, to express our for SB851/HB971. This legislation addresses critical aspects of interscholastic athletics, specifically focusing on student eligibility waivers and school classification.

Chris Beisler, a former client and dear friend, was a passionate advocate for the importance of fair and accessible opportunities in interscholastic athletics. Despite his passing just over a year ago, his commitment to this cause remains alive in the spirit of those who knew him. This testimony draws inspiration from the submission Chris provided in 2019, serving as a poignant reminder of his dedication to creating positive change in the realm of student athletics.

In his 2019 testimony, Chris emphasized the significance of ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or challenges. He believed in the transformative power of sports to shape character, instill discipline, and foster teamwork. Chris's words echo through time, reminding us that we have a responsibility to uphold these values in the legislative decisions we make.

I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of Sir Speedy, who, after reading Chris's testimony, refused to charge us for copies. This act of kindness exemplifies the shared commitment to the principles Chris held dear.

Carrington & Associates, LLC respectfully requests a favorable report for SB851/HB971. We believe that by supporting this legislation, we honor Chris Beisler's legacy and contribute to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive interscholastic athletic environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact that SB851/HB971 can have on the lives of student-athletes across our state. Here is the text of Chris Beisler's testimony:

Chris F. Beisler
c/o 1st Financial, Inc.
1111 Benfield Blvd #106,
Millersville, MD 21108

SB891\HB0971 - Children Exempt From Public School Attendance - Participation in Public High School Clubs and Activities - Support

Good Afternoon Madam Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Chris Beisler; I am the father of Jackson James Beisler who suffers from Acute Situational Anxiety. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today in Support of HB0996. I would also like to thank Delegate Angel and the other bill sponsors for supporting this very important piece of legislation.

I am not here for political reasons; I am simply here trying to help my son. 35 states around the country already allow home schooled children to participate in athletic programs at their local high school; Maryland is far behind the curve on this issue. I respect the opposition that may point to additional costs to the system or the incorrect belief that all home schooled parents reject public school education. In my case, that is not true. I went to public school, my 4 other children have attended public school and if Jackson didn't suffer from this illness, he would attend public school as well.

Half way thru the 8th grade Jackson's mental illness started manifesting itself. He didn't want to go to school. He didn't want to be separated from his family, etc... It got so bad that we had to rush him to the hospital as he was threatening to commit suicide.

After 3 years of psychologists, psychiatrists, countless different medications, home hospital schooling, and 10s of thousands of dollars we were no closer to figuring out what was wrong. Thankfully athletics was always a place he could go and be social and not suffer. We applied for 504B designation (No Child Left Behind) status and received it. We were able to get him into the high school for the 9th grade.

He lasted about two weeks in the 9th grade in school but they were as difficult or more on Jackson, his siblings, and the family unit in general as the three years prior. We worked diligently as parents with the system to get Jackson into school. We were not able to accomplish that goal. As time went on and Jackson missed more school the school system became increasingly more impatient. Finally we received a letter stating the state was going to take us to court and sue us for Jackson not attending school.

At that point we were forced to remove Jackson from the school system and home school him. I could not afford attorneys to fight the state and certainly could not afford any penalty or damages they would seek. And all at the same time Jackson is not getting educated.

I have spoken with many parents in my situation. Each of us will gladly pay whatever costs are associated with our children participating on our local sports teams. I say ours, because our taxes pay for the services, fields, uniforms, equipment, referees, etc. that are a part of our local high school teams. Our children also have their siblings or other neighborhood friends who play on these teams, it helps build community.

HB0996 has sensible provisions that protect the school system while allowing children to participate in competitive sports with their peers. Please do not punish our children for philosophical differences that adults may have on broader issues. National numbers suggest that we are talking about less than 1% of home schooled children that will participate; we are not going to flood the local school systems with additional children. These will be isolated instances, but will mean the world to the children and families that get to benefit from this legislation.

Again, please think of the Tim Tebow's of the world, if he hadn't had the opportunity to participate on his local high school football team; he would have never earned a scholarship to play football at the

University of Florida, never had the chance to win a National Championship, a Heisman Trophy, earn a college degree, play professional football and move on to use his degree for whatever career choices he may choose. Give our children that same chance to live out their dreams.

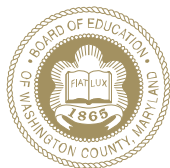
As a father, I am begging you for a FAVORABLE Report on HB0996.

Please feel free to contact Darrell Carrington, Managing Director, darrell.carrington@verizon.net or 732-763-7398 if you have any questions or require additional information.

SB 851 support WCBOE 3-6-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Jamie Brown

Position: FAV



BILL: Senate Bill 851 / House Bill 971
TITLE: Interscholastic Athletics- Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification
HEARING DATE: March 6, 2024 / February 21, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment / House Ways and Means
CONTACT: Mr. Steve Edwards, Deputy Communications Officer (301-766-8914)

The Washington County Board of Education supports Senate Bill 851, which authorize a county board of education to waive a certain eligibility requirement for participation in interscholastic athletics at a certain Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association member school for students who attend certain public high schools; and require a county superintendent of schools to report to the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association the school enrollment of member schools in grades 9, 10, and 11 in a certain manner.

Quite simply, this bill is about providing all students with the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics while also pursuing special career and/or academic training at a programmatic or virtual school other than their zoned high school. For many students, having the opportunity to compete in interscholastic athletics provides them with an additional incentive to regularly attend school and achieve academically. Being part of a team and competing in interscholastic athletics also enables students to learn important soft skills and life lessons in a way that is meaningful to them.

In Washington County, the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, or BISFA, is open to all high school students interested in arts programming. Since opening in 2009, BISFA has never had an enrollment greater than 400 students in an academic year. While this unique comprehensive high school provides students with excellent opportunities in the arts, it does not offer athletic programs. As an alternative, students enrolled at BISFA may participate in interscholastic athletics at South Hagerstown High School which is the high school located in the BISFA attendance zone that offers such programs. While some students take advantage of this opportunity, most do not have any association to South High as it is not their home high school and not the school they attend each day.

BISFA exemplifies the issue this bill will help to resolve. Although there are students at small programmatic and virtual schools, like BISFA, who want to engage in interscholastic athletics, these schools typically do not have their own athletic programs, the necessary facilities and fields, or enough interest among their small student populations to field teams and remain eligible. Allowing students to request a waiver that will enable them to participate in athletic programs at their home school will address this issue and give students another opportunity to engage with their respective schools and school communities.

We support Senate Bill 851 as it would allow students athletic opportunities at their home school by providing those who participate in small, programmatic and virtual schools with the same opportunity to participate in athletics as their peers enjoy at their home high school. If we are seeking to do what is in the best interest of students, allowing local Boards of Education to consider eligibility waivers as outlined in the bill is the right thing to do.

Washington County Board of Education respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 851.

Thank you.

Cc: Washington County Board of Education Members
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent
Dr. Jennifer Webster, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Leadership
Dr. Garry Willow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel
Mr. John Woolums, Director of Governmental Relations, Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Ms. Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland

SB 851 Sen Corderman Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

PAUL D. CORDERMAN
Legislative District 2
Frederick and Washington Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Education, Business and Administration



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 6, 2024

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Chair Brian Feldman
Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill SB 851 – Public Schools – Interscholastic Athletics – Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the EEE Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 851. This bill authorizes a local board of education to waive the eligibility requirement for high school interscholastic athletics that the student be enrolled at and attend a member school if (1) the student attends a public school in the county that is not the student's zoned or "home" school, (2) the public school the student attends does not have an interscholastic athletics program, and (3) the student meets all other eligibility requirements established by the local board of education and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA).

This legislation simply affords the opportunity to play interscholastic sports to all public high school students, including those that attend nontraditional public school, such as a magnet or technical school where sports are not offered.

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Corderman".

Paul D. Corderman
District 2 – Washington & Frederick Counties

SB851 Public Schools- Interscholastic Athletics -

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: UNF

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of Senate Bill 851
Public Schools – Interscholastic Athletics – Student Eligibility
Waiver and School Classification**

March 6, 2024

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners appreciates the spirit of the legislation, but has several concerns and must oppose Senate Bill 851

As drafted, the bill presents implementation challenges at a very basic level for the Baltimore City Schools. The legislation requires students to receive a waiver to participate with their “zoned” school; however, Baltimore City Schools do not maintain zoned/home school designations. Without an assigned school, how would we determine at which school the student was eligible to compete? In addition, how would we evaluate a request if a student wanted to participate at a citywide school?

In short, it is impractical to invoke a home school rule in districts that do not identify home schools at the high school level. Therefore, for the forgoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes Senate Bill 851 and urges an unfavorable report

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq.
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SB 851.Student Eligibility at Another High School.

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: UNF

BILL: Senate Bill 851
TITLE: Public Schools - Interscholastic Athletics - Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: March 6, 2024
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 851, a bill to mandate changes to the eligibility criteria for student athletes attending a high school other than the one for which they would participate in athletics.

MABE opposes this bill in favor of allowing the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to continue to govern the operation of Maryland's interscholastic sports, including considering the type of change proposed in this legislation.

Interscholastic sports programs in Maryland's public schools are conducted in accordance with the standards developed by the MPSSAA and the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education. Since 1991, interscholastic sports in Maryland have operated in accordance with the "Master Agreement Outlining the Interscholastic Structure for Public Schools in Maryland," which establishes the responsibilities of MPSSAA, MSDE, and local school systems. Local boards of education believe that this system of regulations and oversight is working well.

Maryland places a high priority on establishing and maintaining a statewide interscholastic athletic system that assures that sports activities are a part of and contribute toward the entire educational program. MABE encourages proponents of the changes contained in Senate Bill 851 to pursue such changes in the administrative and regulatory arena established for this purpose.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 851.

02.29.24 LOO SB 0851 Joint.pdf

Uploaded by: Terry Hale

Position: UNF

Danielle Hornberger
County Executive

Steven Overbay
Director of Administration

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Jackie Gregory
Council President

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CECIL COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Cecil County Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Elkton, MD 21921

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0851 – Public Schools – Interscholastic Athletics – Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification
Letter of Opposition

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

The County Council and the County Executive of Cecil County unanimously oppose SB 0851 - Public Schools – Interscholastic Athletics – Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification. The Hearing on this legislation is scheduled on March 6, 2024.

It is our understanding that this legislation is authorizing a county board of education to waive a certain eligibility requirement for participation in interscholastic athletics at a Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association member school for students who attend certain public high schools; and requiring a county superintendent of schools to report to the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association the school enrollment of member schools in grades 9, 10, and 11 in a certain manner.

We believe that the decision to waive a certain eligibility requirement for participation in interscholastic athletics may create disparities for our student athletics at certain schools. Cecil County opposes this legislation.

The County Executive and County Council of Cecil County respectfully request that the Education, Energy and Environment Committee send an unfavorable report on SB 0851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hornberger".

Danielle Hornberger
County Executive

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jackie Gregory".

Jackie Gregory
President of County Council

SB 851- Education- Public Schools Athletics - Elig

Uploaded by: Andy Warner

Position: INFO

ORGANIZED 1946

TELEPHONE: (410) 767-0376
FAX: (410) 333-3111



MEMBER OF THE
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
STATE HIGH SCHOOL
ASSOCIATIONS

R. ANDREW WARNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

BILL:	Senate Bill 851	DATE:	March 7, 2024
SUBJECT:	Public Schools – Interscholastic Athletics – Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification	COMMITTEE:	Education, Energy, and the Environment
POSITION:	Information		
CONTACT:	R. Andrew Warner 410-767-0376 robert.warner1@maryland.gov		

EXPLANATION:

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) offers this written testimony regarding Senate Bill 851, *Public Schools – Interscholastic Athletics – Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification*. The MPSSAA recognizes the growing alternatives to the traditional school experience for enrolled students. Senate Bill 851 would authorize county boards of education to waive eligibility regulations so that a student who is attending a public school that is not the student’s “zoned school” may participate in interscholastic athletics at the student’s zoned school, if the student’s school of attendance does not have an interscholastic athletics program. The MPSSAA respectfully requests the following information be taken into consideration regarding the possible impacts of Senate Bill 851.

Interscholastic athletics in Maryland public schools are governed by the MPSSAA. The MPSSAA receives its authority from the Master Agreement Outlining the Interscholastic Athletic Structure for Public Schools in Maryland. Each of the 24 local educational agencies (LEAs) and the Maryland State Department of Education are signatories of that agreement. The regulations found in COMAR 13A.06.03 provide for a well-balanced interscholastic program and equity of competition for over 112,000 public school participants annually.

The MPSSAA Board of Control, at their legislative meeting in December 2023, debated a proposal from Washington County Public Schools through the amendment process in COMAR 13A.06.03.11 that is similar to Senate Bill 851. The deliberations identified a number of challenges that are discussed in more detail below, including differences in how each LEA zones schools, increased transportation demands within an already tight school system budget, and inequities among zoned schools without sport programs and non-zoned schools without sport programs. The MPSSAA Board of Control was unable to support a measure like Senate Bill 851 because of these inequities and continues to discuss regulatory amendments to expand participation opportunities equitably across all jurisdictions.

COMAR 13A.06.03.01 states, “Local school systems may adopt rules governing their athletic programs that are more restrictive than those of the MPSSAA. Less restrictive rules may not be adopted.” This regulation sets a baseline agreement among all LEAs for equitable participation and competition between interscholastic athletic programs across the State. Senate Bill 851 would disrupt that baseline by creating less restrictive eligibility criteria for some jurisdictions. The MPSSAA is aware of one LEA (Baltimore City Public Schools) that does not designate zoned high schools for students. Thus, Senate Bill 851 would provide an opportunity for students in certain parts of the State that is not afforded to the thousands of student participants from Baltimore City or other LEAs that do not have zoned schools for their students.

Senate Bill 851 states, “A county board may waive the eligibility regulation if “[t]he public school the student attends . . . does not have an interscholastic athletics program.” This statement draws into question whether “interscholastic athletics program” means any sport or the sport in which a student seeks to participate. This definition is crucial to equitable participation. Some LEAs do not offer complete programming at a non-zoned school. The MPSSAA would need to understand if students are allowed to participate in one sport at their zone school while remaining affiliated with the school of attendance for another sport.

Senate Bill 851 could pose challenges when reporting the number of students enrolled (counting students twice), raise questions about multi-sport participation in the same sport season, and create an inequity for students at a zoned school without a sport offering as compared to students at a non-zoned school without a sport offering. Senate Bill 851 only allows a student at a non-zoned school to compete at a zoned school but does not address students at zoned schools without a sports program. Furthermore, each LEA is already experiencing the pressure that the NCAA transfer portal has created, with students and families attempting to transfer schools for athletic purposes on a yearly basis.

Senate Bill 851 does not consider transportation responsibilities or costs on LEAs. If a student is enrolled at a non-zoned school, but is allowed to participate at their zoned school, the LEA may incur transportation costs to return the student to their zoned school for practice and contests or may need to transport the student from their non-zoned school to meet their zoned school at an away sporting contest. Senate Bill 851 also does not take into consideration administrative oversight of two different schools, including attendance policies, discipline, and health and safety services such as follow-ups on concussions or other injuries.

COMAR 13A.06.03.06 requires each LEA to submit to the MPSSAA the actual enrollment of students at each member school so that the MPSSAA can determine classifications based on the total number of students the school may draw participants from. When fielding a team, a school with a pool of 2,000 students has a competitive advantage over a school with a pool of 300 students, even if only one student participates. Senate Bill 851 does not consider the pool of students from the non-zoned school, but rather only factors in the actual participant that is given a waiver.

The MPSSAA is unaware of any student who is unable to compete in interscholastic athletics in Washington County Public Schools based on the current COMAR language. Senate Bill 851 looks to disperse students back to multiple designated schools, while current procedures adopted by the local educational agency and in compliance with COMAR allows students to participate collectively at a single designated school that accounts for the total pool of students. These same procedures have been used by Baltimore City Schools and other jurisdictions to provide opportunities for students based on alternative educational opportunities and/or low enrollment schools.

The MPSSAA respectfully requests that you consider this information as you deliberate Senate Bill 851.