

Testimony for the House Ways and Means Committee

Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024

HB 151 - Charles County Board of Education - Vacancy Procedures - Timing and Video Streaming and Archiving

Favorable with Amendments

Hello Chair Atterberry, Vice-Chair Wilkens, and committee members,

I write to urge your support, with amendments, for Del. Patterson's legislation, HB 151. As a Charles County resident and activist, I believe that the core of this bill, to mandate the Charles County Board of Education work expeditiously to appoint a replacement in the event a vacancy occurs, would greatly help in ensuring that all residents are given equal representation. However, I also urge the committee to add amendments to the bill that would put residents first and allow us to have a bigger say in who fills future vacancies.

My amendments are as follows:

1. Only allow the appointed member to serve until the next scheduled election. This way if there is a vacancy within the first two years, which happened after the 2022 election, voters would be able to vote for a replacement to finish the term during the presidential election.
2. Mandate that once the application period has ended the Board of Education shall hold a public townhall, in the district of the vacant member, where residents can ask candidates questions.
3. Mandate the discussion and appointment vote by the Board of Education be public.

Again, I urge the committee to support, with the amendments stated above, HB 151.

In Solidarity,

Carlos Childs