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03/05/2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

### **Support Testimony for SB0948 - Children - Parental Rights - Educational Rights**

Hearing Date: March 07, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud Immigrant, Parent, Community advocate and resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I appreciate the opportunity to testify to and express my strong support for **Senate Bill 948 (SB0948)**, which seeks to enhance parental involvement in students' education by requiring county school boards to develop structured policies and complaint resolution processes.

Parental engagement is a critical factor in student success. Research consistently demonstrates that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, students perform better academically, exhibit improved behavior, and are more likely to graduate. SB0948 strengthens this crucial link by mandating school boards to create comprehensive policies that encourage parental participation, provide clear guidelines, and establish mechanisms for resolving concerns.

### **Why This Bill is Necessary**

1. **Encourages Parental Engagement** – Many parents, especially those from minority backgrounds, face systemic barriers to participating in their children's education. A formalized policy will ensure that all parents have a clear, structured way to be involved, benefiting students across all communities.
2. **Increases School Accountability** – Requiring school boards to create transparent parental involvement policies ensures that schools are responsive to the needs of students and families, ultimately improving the education system.
3. **Establishes a Clear Complaint Resolution Process** – Many parents feel unheard when raising concerns with school administrators. This bill provides them with a structured method to voice their concerns and seek resolution.

4. **Strengthens School-Parent Relationships** – A well-implemented policy will promote collaboration rather than conflict, creating a shared commitment to student success.
5. **Promotes Equity in Education** – Families of all backgrounds should have equal opportunities to engage in their children's education. SB0948 ensures that schools actively work toward inclusivity in parental involvement.

### **Recommended Amendments for Effective Implementation**

While I strongly support SB0948, I urge the committee to consider the following recommendations to ensure its effective and equitable implementation:

1. **Statewide Guidelines for Policy Development** – While local control is important, the Maryland State Department of Education should provide standardized guidelines to ensure consistency across counties while allowing flexibility for local needs.
2. **Training for School Staff and Parents** – Schools should be required to provide training for administrators, teachers, and parents on effective engagement strategies to prevent adversarial interactions and encourage constructive dialogue.
3. **Accessible and Culturally Inclusive Policies** – Policies should be translated into multiple languages and designed to accommodate families with limited English proficiency or those unfamiliar with the U.S. education system.
4. **Independent Oversight Body** – An independent advisory board could be established to review implementation and address concerns related to the fairness of complaint resolutions.
5. **Periodic Review and Public Input** – The policy should include provisions for periodic review and adjustments based on feedback from parents, educators, and community stakeholders.

By incorporating these recommendations, SB0948 will be more effective in fostering meaningful parental engagement, promoting equity, and ensuring that schools and families work together to create the best possible educational outcomes for students.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0948 and look forward to its passage with thoughtful implementation strategies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Maureen Wambui**