

February 24, 2025

Testimony on HB 1075
Calvert County Board of Education – Elections for Members Representing Specific Districts –
Alterations
Ways and Means

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 1075, which corrects an issue in Calvert County where Board of Education members representing a specific district of the county are elected by all voters within the county – even when voters in that particular district have demographic characteristics that differ from those of the county at large.

This can and has led to voters being represented a board member who was elected by a minority of voters in that particular district. In this way, at-large election of district-specific representatives can be used as a way to suppress the interests of a minority group that has majority status only within a particular district or districts of the county.

A basic principle of democracy is that officials should be elected by the people they represent. The institution of in-district voting would end a discriminatory and anti-democratic policy that has historically prevented minority voters from meaningfully engaging in the democratic process. This leads to unfair and ineffective representation that has the overall effect of discouraging voter engagement with their commissioner and with the voting process overall.

We support standards that both protect the right to vote and promote wider civic engagement within the community. Specifying that Board of Education members be elected by and responsible to the voters in their district alone will increase diversity of viewpoints among these bodies as a whole and will focus attention on the specific local concerns and needs in each of these counties.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 1075.