

February 7, 2025

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Distinguished Committee Members—

I am writing to express my strong support for HB391, which would amend election law so Board of Education members are elected by district in several counties, including my home county of St. Mary's.

Board of Education members are currently elected at-large. Voters in one part of the county are able to influence the election of representatives for other areas under this practice. In a representative democracy we cherish the right to exercise our vote. Recognizing the unique interests, priorities, and challenges of people in different areas is possible when each person in a district has the ability to directly elect their representation. One person, one vote is diminished in at-large elections where voters outside a given district can have enormous influence on who is elected.

It is my firm belief that the education of our youth is a bedrock of democracy and free society. The idea behind public school is community coming together in the best interests of young people to inspire and elevate them to success. To do that requires a comprehensive approach where all can meaningfully participate by electing a representative. That is not possible under at-large voting, where the votes of those in a single district are overwhelmed by votes from across the entire jurisdiction.

With your support, our community can ensure the education received by our youth is overseen by Board of Education members directly elected by voters in the district they represent.

I respectfully urge a **favorable** report for HB391.

Thank you,

Brandon Russell
St. Mary's County, MD