



**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Ways & Means Committee
February 4, 2025**

HB0550: FAVORABLE

Local Public Campaign Financing - Expansion to Additional Offices

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Local Public Campaign Financing - Expansion to Additional Offices** for the opportunity to create robust participation in governance of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) through availability of public campaign funds for Board candidates.

In Howard County, the Board is composed of seven members, two of which are at-large, and a student member elected by students for a one-year term. The Board is responsible for a more than one-billion-dollar budget and sets local education policy consistent with state and federal laws governing public education. Members of the Board play a vital role in engaging student, parent, and community member voice in the oversight and management of the HCPSS.

Candidates for the Board, however, cannot currently take advantage of public campaign financing that is authorized for executive and legislative positions elected to provide similar representation to the citizens of Howard County. Aiming to remedy this prohibition, HB0550 allows the governing body of Howard County to establish a system of campaign financing specific to Board elections. The system must follow existing law related to establishments of such financing. The Board supports public campaign financing as a measure often used to diversify candidate pools for elected office as well as lessen the influence of large/special interest donors.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB0550 from this Committee.