

Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

**SB 554 Education Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Appointment Process -
Alterations**

Bill Hearing Date: March 11th, 2026

Position: Unfavorable

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Benjamin H. Grimaldi, I am a 9th grader from Baltimore City, and the Legislative Affairs Director for the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City. I oppose SB 554, which not only removes the requirement that the Mayor meet with community groups when deciding on Board Members, but also requires the Maryland State Senate to approve them.

The Baltimore City School Board is composed of nine appointed and three elected members. Ensuring that stakeholders influence the nine appointed members, who compose three-fourths of the school board, is critically important. Currently, the Mayor must reach out to a community panel, which is composed of many different stakeholder groups such as teachers, students, and parents.

This is an important part of the process, as this is where stakeholders can give their views. Last year, I was able to help with the interviewing and resume reviewing portion for selecting a student commissioner to fill a vacant position. It was valuable for me and for students across Baltimore City because it helped ensure that the student voice had a say in who the next Student Commissioner should be. Without this process, stakeholder groups will be deprived of a say in who oversees their school system.

Also, subjecting Baltimore City School Board Members to Senate confirmation is not a substitute. No other school district has to go through this sort of regulation from above. There is a major difference between a Mayor being forced to go to his constituents for guidance on school board members, and being forced to go away from his constituents, to the State Senate, for approval on it. This will only take the process further away from the stakeholder groups that are directly affected by school board decisions.

School Districts should fulfill local needs, and stakeholder groups should have a say in their composition. The Mayor should consult stakeholder groups when he appoints a school board member, not the Maryland Senate. Therefore, we request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 554.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Benjamin H. Grimaldi

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