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Patrick Moran – President

SB 554 – Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners – Appointment Process – Alterations

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 11, 2026

Position: UNFAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 represents 55,000 state, county, and municipal employees across Maryland, including educational support professionals who work in Baltimore City Public Schools. We oppose senate bill 554. SB 554 would remove the community panel, of which AFSCME is a part, that is responsible for interviewing board applicants and submitting a list of finalists to the Mayor. The legislation replaces this community panel, with a process where appointed commissioners would be selected by the Mayor and then subjected to State Senate confirmation.

School boards should be locally controlled. The community panel in place currently allows voices from those who work in our school system, students, families, and community groups like the ACLU, and MD Disability Rights Coalition to have a voice in the selection process. Speaking to our experience, we bring our contracts in front of this board. It is helpful to know whether Board members support health and safety standards, or professional development for staff prior to their selection onto the commission. Sometimes the candidate that we recommend to the Mayor is chosen, and sometimes they are not, but it is nice for our members to have an opportunity to provide input on potential candidates who set policy about their work. In its purest form, this is what local control means.

There is no justifiable reason for Baltimore City to become the first and only jurisdiction in the state to have School Board Commissioners who are subject to state senate confirmation. We urge the committee to provide an unfavorable report on SB 554.

