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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Bill:** Senate Bill 554

**Title:** *Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners – Appointment Process – Alterations*

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Sponsor:** Senator Antonio Hayes

*Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,*

For the record, I am Senator Antonio Hayes, and I am here to present **Senate Bill 554**, which seeks to modernize and streamline the appointment process for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

The Current Process under current law, the Mayor of Baltimore must select School Board appointees from a list provided by the "Baltimore City Public School Board Community Panel". This panel is composed of representatives from various specific organizations, including the Teachers Union, the City Council, and others. Currently, if the Mayor does not wish to appoint someone from the provided list, they must reconvene the panel to submit additional names .

SB 554 proposes two primary changes to improve accountability and efficiency in the selection of school leadership:

This bill repeals the statutory provisions mandating the use of the Community Panel for the selection of nominees. By removing the panel, we allow the Mayor direct authority to select the best-qualified candidates for these critical roles.

Crucially, this bill establishes a new check and balance. While the Mayor retains the power to appoint the nine voting members, these appointments will now be subject to confirmation by the Senate of Maryland. This confirmation requirement also extends to appointments made to fill vacancies on the Board.

It is important to note that while the *selection process* is changing, the *qualification standards* are not. SB 554 preserves the requirements that:

- At least four members must possess high-level knowledge and expertise in business, non-profit, or government administration.
- At least three members must possess high-level expertise in education.
- The Board must include a parent of a student currently enrolled in the system.
- The Board must include a member with knowledge regarding the education of children with disabilities.

By instituting Senate confirmation, we ensure that nominees undergo a rigorous vetting process consistent with other high-level appointments in the State. This adds a necessary layer of state-level oversight to the governance of the Baltimore City Public School System.

The changes in this Act will take effect on July 1, 2026. The Senate confirmation requirement will apply to members appointed or filling vacancies after that effective date .

I believe this structure provides the right balance of executive authority and legislative oversight.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 554.

**Position: Favorable**