

Greetings, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee,

My name is Dana Schallheim, and I am the longest serving elected member of The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County, first elected in 2018 and reelected in 2024. Anne Arundel County Public Schools is the 37th largest public school system in the country serving more than 84,000 students and employing more than 12,000 teachers and staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you in support of SB0409 which would provide better compensation for future Board of Education of Anne Arundel County members beginning July 1, 2029. **I speak today as an individual and NOT on behalf of the Board.** Thank you to the Anne Arundel County Senators and Anne Arundel County House Delegation for sponsoring this bill and to Senator Gile for heading the charge. I respectfully request a favorable vote.

I want to make clear to the committee that this legislation is **NOT** about me, or my colleagues, Dr. Tobin and Mr. Silkworth. We are all termed out at the end of our current term which ends December 2028. Instead, this is about future Board members and the overall health of The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County.

Better Board member compensation is important for the following reasons:

- **Acknowledging Responsibility** - Maryland Boards of Education are the only elected body that has executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial functions. We provide oversight and governance, employ the Superintendent, make complex policy decisions, and approve the budget which currently stands at approximately \$1.9B for the operating budget a \$231M capital budget. Higher compensation formally recognizes the substantial time, expertise, and dedication required for these essential public service roles.
- **Providing Necessary Support** - Board of Education of Anne Arundel County members have no committed staff for each Board member and do not receive personal benefits of any kind including health insurance. We do have one executive level assistant for the entire Board and her assistant. Both keep the business of the Board running and handle constituent services on behalf of all members.
- **Acknowledging Time** - Approximating a full-time job at times, often spilling into evenings and weekends, I spend my time on the following:
 - Constituent services via phone calls, emails, and texts,
 - Preparing for and attending numerous meetings including our public business and committee meetings, closed sessions, and conferences.

- Attending school events (I could be out every night most weeks at events), and
- Engaging constituents at community events.
- **Attracting and Retaining Qualified Candidates While Broadening Representation** - Offering better compensation makes the position more accessible and appealing to a wider range of individuals, reducing financial barriers, and creating a board that better reflects the racial and socioeconomic makeup of Anne Arundel County and the students it serves for a year-round job, at times equivalent to a full-time job.
- **Enhancing Professionalism and Accountability** - Establishing better compensation can help standardize expectations for performance and time commitment, potentially attracting individuals with professional skill sets and relevant experience (e.g., in data analysis, governance, or finance).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB0409. I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Best,

Dana Schallheim

Board of Education of Anne Arundel County, District 5

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