

EDUCATION ADVOCACY COALITION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SENATE BILL 51

PUBLIC SCHOOLS—SELF-CONTAINED SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS— USE OF VIDEO RECORDING DEVICES

FEBRUARY 4, 2026

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 51 with amendment to ensure the recordings are not used in student discipline or placement decisions.

The EAC appreciates the intent of Senate Bill 51, which would require the installation of at least one video recording device in each self-contained special education classroom by the beginning of the 2026-27 school year. Many EAC members represent or work with families who have expressed concern when their children have come home from school with unexplained injuries or reports indicating that restraint or seclusion or other “hands-on” interventions have been used with their children.

Access to video has the potential to protect some of our most vulnerable children and would enable parents to understand what may have occurred during the school day, particularly when because of young age, trauma or disability, their children are unable to share details of their day.

The amendment we seek is inclusion of the following protection:

After Section (J):

THE DEPARTMENT, A COUNTY BOARD, A SCHOOL, OR A PRINCIPAL MAY NOT USE A VIDEO RECORDING MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION:

(1) AS EVIDENCE IN A COMPLAINT AGAINST A STUDENT OR SCHOOL EMPLOYEE THAT IS NOT RELATED TO A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT; OR

(2) IN THE OBSERVATION OR EVALUATION OF A STUDENT FOR STUDENT PLACEMENT DECISIONS

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As advocates for all students with disabilities throughout Maryland, a subset of whom are educated in self-contained special education classrooms and whose parents have made clear to us that they support cameras in schools for a variety of reasons, the EAC supports Senate Bill 51 with this amendment.

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Respectfully submitted,

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