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**Written Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
SB 554 - Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners –
Appointment Process – Alterations
March 11, 2026**

UNFAVORABLE

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, AFT Maryland is a state federation of unions including the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU). On behalf of BTU, we ask for an unfavorable report on SB 554, which seeks to alter the appointment process for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

The proposed changes in this bill threaten to undermine the hard-won progress Baltimore City has made toward a more democratic and transparent school board. The primary concern is the potential erosion of accountability to the public. For years, the community has worked to transition away from a strictly appointed board toward a hybrid or fully elected model for accountability and to ensure the board remains responsive to the citizens. This bill represents a move in the opposite direction.

SB 554 fails to address the underlying need for greater transparency and community partnership in our school system's governance. It risks creating a closed-door selection process that lacks the necessary oversight from the taxpayers who fund our schools. For the sake of stability and democratic integrity in Baltimore City's education system, AFT Maryland asks for an unfavorable report. Thank you.

