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Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Legislative District 40



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, with the adopted amendments, seeks to modernize the appointment process and provide fair compensation for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

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". SB 554 repeals the statutory provisions mandating the use of this specific Community Panel for the selection of nominees.

However, to ensure robust community engagement, amended provisions now require the Mayor to hold a public hearing to select qualified candidates for appointment to the board.

- The Mayor must provide at least 10 days' advance notice of this hearing, posted electronically on the school system's website.
- This hearing guarantees that dozens of specified community organizations, as well as the public at large, have the opportunity to present their views.
- Furthermore, these specified groups may submit their preferred ranking of board candidates to the Mayor prior to an appointment.

Following this public input process, the Mayor retains the power to appoint the voting members, but these appointments will now be subject to confirmation by the Senate of Maryland.

Crucially, this bill preserves the rigorous qualification standards. The Board must still include:

- At least four members with high-level knowledge and expertise concerning the successful administration of a large business, nonprofit, or governmental entity.
- At least three members possessing a high level of knowledge and expertise concerning education.
- A parent of a student enrolled in the Baltimore City Public School System.
- A member with knowledge or experience in the education of children with disabilities.

Additionally, recognizing the immense dedication required to serve, the amended bill introduces compensation for board members.

- Board members, excluding the student member, are entitled to receive \$10,000 annually as compensation.
- A student member who completes a full term will be granted a \$10,000 scholarship to be applied toward higher education or a registered apprenticeship program.
- This scholarship will be paid directly to the institution or program and is not considered taxable income.

By instituting public hearings, Senate confirmation, and fair compensation, we ensure a transparent, rigorous, and equitable governance structure for the Baltimore City Public School System.

I respectfully request a favorable report with amendments on Senate Bill 554.

Position: Favorable with Amendments