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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0565**Submitted February 9, 2026****Members**

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Madam Chair and Members of the Government, Labor and
Elections Committee

The Calvert County Democratic Central Committee submits this testimony in support of HB0565, the Fair Representation Act. This legislation addresses a structural issue in the way members of the Calvert County Board of Education are elected and would improve fairness, accountability, and representative governance.

Associate Members

Garrett Hill
Jennifer Seidel

Currently, the Calvert County Board of Education consists of five elected members: three designated to represent the county's three commissioner districts and two elected at large. However, all five members are elected by voters countywide, regardless of district designation. As a result, the current system does not provide meaningful district-based representation and instead dilutes the distinct perspectives, needs, and concerns of different areas of the county.

Countywide, at-large voting diminishes the ability of voters in specific communities to elect representatives who reflect their local priorities. This impact is particularly significant in counties where demographic diversity is concentrated geographically. According to the 2024 Census, Calvert County's population is approximately 78.6 percent white, with much of its racial and ethnic diversity concentrated in communities such as Prince Frederick, Lusby, and Chesapeake Beach. Under the current at-large system, voters in these areas have their collective voices diluted when their votes are combined with those of the entire county.

Historically, at-large election systems have been used in many jurisdictions to weaken the electoral influence of minority voters. While circumstances and motivations may differ today, the structural effect remains -- at-large voting reduces accountability to specific communities and can result in the underrepresentation of marginalized populations. When elected officials are not required to secure support from the district they intend to represent, there is less incentive to address district-specific concerns.

HB0565 provides a balanced and practical solution. Under this legislation, Calvert County would retain two at-large members to represent countywide interests, while the three district-based members would be elected solely by voters within their respective districts.

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This approach preserves a countywide perspective while ensuring that each district has direct, accountable representation that reflects its unique demographics, priorities, and needs.

Fair and representative electoral systems are essential to public trust and effective governance. As we look toward the future, particularly in an area as critical as public education, it is imperative that Boards of Education reflect the communities they serve. Ensuring equitable representation strengthens decision-making and helps guarantee that students, families, and educators across all areas of the county have a meaningful voice.

For these reasons, the Calvert County Democratic Central Committee strongly supports the passage of HB0565.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy L. Yoe, Chair