

Testimony on SB0099
Open Meetings Act - County Boards of Education - Enhanced Requirements
(Local Boards of Education Transparency Act)

Favorable With Amendments

The Honorable Chair, Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair Delegate Jessica Feldmark, and esteemed members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing to ask you to vote favorably with amendments on Senate Bill 99. This bill would significantly increase public access to information relating to the work performed by county Boards of Education by making them subject to enhanced Open Meetings Act requirements.

The various local Boards of Education in Maryland conduct business in varying levels of transparency to the public. Establishing a statewide framework will help with consistency and accountability by requiring county Board meeting agendas and materials to be made available in advance of meetings, holding certain of these meetings online and available to the public, and archiving the recordings for future viewing. Ultimately, these improvements will give parents and interested parties easier access to information about the decisions that affect their children, their schools, and their tax dollars.

I support the reasonable amendments advanced by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), which (1) protect against inadvertent inclusion of pornographic or obscene material in archived recordings and (2) require live video streaming of a meeting only if the meeting is held at particular locations.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote favorably with amendments on SB0099.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melinda Littell
Arnold, D33C