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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony for Senate Bill 40**  
**Baltimore County Board of Education – Alterations of Elected Member Districts and**  
**Establishment of Redistricting Process**  
**Before the Ways and Means Committee**  
**April 1, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Wilkins and members of the committee.

Senate Bill 40 (“SB 40”) is a reintroduction of last year’s Senate Bill 656 (“SB656”), which passed out of the Senate in a 44-3 vote, but failed to pass out of the Baltimore County House Delegate after a 9-4 vote failed to meet the required 11 vote threshold to receive a letter of support.

Concerns were raised by a few of our House colleagues regarding the political implications of having the Baltimore County Board of Education submit the initial proposed redistricting map to the General Assembly. To assuage these concerns, we have changed the legislation to have the Department of Legislative Services draw the district lines. Outside of this alteration, the bill remains the same as SB656.

This year, Baltimore County will be holding elections for a number of elected offices, including our school board. While the Baltimore County Board of Education consists of 12 members,<sup>1</sup> seven board members are seated after participating in a nonpartisan election. Under current law one member is “elected from each of the seven councilmanic districts in the county, established by the County Council of Baltimore County, by the voters of that district”<sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 2024, the County Council introduced a Charter amendment in Bill No. 47-24 which proposed to increase the number of council members from 7 to 9, beginning with the 2026 election cycle. Section 5 of the bill states that:

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<sup>1</sup> Education Code §3-2B-01(a).

<sup>2</sup> Education Code §3-2B-01(b)(1)(i).

... the thirtieth day following the general election on November 5, 2024, the County Executive and County Council shall send written notification to the Baltimore County delegation to the Maryland General Assembly that §3-2B-01 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland relating to the composition and method of election of the Baltimore County Board of Education is to be amended to consist of: nine nonpartisan elected members, elected from the nine councilmanic districts of Baltimore County, as set forth in this Act, by the voters of that councilmanic district; two appointed members; and one student member.

While Baltimore County voters expanded the County Council from seven Councilmembers to nine, the County Council did not have the authority to bind us to enact legislation to increase the number of elected members of the school board to nine and reduce the number of appointed members from four to two. This authority rests with us to determine how—and if—the State provisions will be amended.

After seeking the input of key stakeholders, it became clear that they did not want a larger school board. It was also clear that decreasing the number of gubernatorial appointments was unacceptable as well. So, I set out to produce a method that kept things as close to status quo as possible but addressed the reality that the number of our elected school board members were tied to a seven-member County Council.

SB 40 proposes that new framework. If we do not want to increase the school board's size, and we do not want to modify the balance we have with our hybrid board, we have to create school board districts separate and apart from County Council districts. SB 40 uses the seven current council districts and converts them to school board districts.<sup>3</sup> We would use these current council districts for the 2026 and 2030 elections and Baltimore County voters will continue to vote for a school board member who would be a resident living within their school board district.

This arrangement, with nine council districts and seven school board districts, is the same arrangement as if this legislature made no decision this session.

Under SB 40 and beginning with the next decennial U.S. Census in 2030, school board districts will be reapportioned after each census,<sup>4</sup> effective until the following decennial U.S. Census.<sup>5</sup>

Starting with the 2034 General Election, one member will be elected from each of the seven school board districts established by the aforementioned redistricting process. The reapportioned districts will be substantially equal in population.<sup>6</sup>

Our voters are capable of understanding multiple layers of districts. Baltimore County is divided into nine County Council districts, eight State legislative districts, and four federal congressional districts. And council members, state representatives, and federal legislators work together to address the needs of our Baltimore County residents. I believe in our elected school board members' ability to do the same, just as the four appointed at-large members currently do.

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<sup>3</sup> See proposed Education Code §3-2B-01(b)(1)(i)(1).

<sup>4</sup> See proposed Education Code §3-2B-11(B)(1)1.

<sup>5</sup> See proposed Education Code §3-2B-11(B)(1)2.

<sup>6</sup> See proposed Education Code §3-2B-11(B)(2).

In conclusion, as I noted at the beginning of my testimony, current law dictates that that one member is “elected from each of the seven councilmanic districts in the county, established by the County Council of Baltimore County, by the voters of that district”, so we cannot wait until the next legislative session to address this; we have to address this matter this session. In 2026, there will be nine Council districts and no longer align with the Education Code. For that and the aforementioned reasons, I ask this Committee for a favorable report on SB 40.