

**FAVORABLE WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON HB1288**

**County Boards of Education – Appointed Members in Leadership Positions - Prohibition**

**Submitted by Lorette Vetusi – 3/9/26**

My name is Lorette Vetusi, and I am a resident of Harford County. I am submitting my favorable written testimony for *Maryland House Bill 1288 - County Boards of Education - Appointed Members in Leadership Positions – Prohibition*. In the county in which I live (Harford), the county executive is authorized to appoint 3 of the 9 members (one third!) of the board of education. It is obvious that his appointees have been selected based on their political alignment with him rather than on their relevant qualifications for the job. One glaring example is his most recent appointee who is just 21 years old, fresh out of college, with absolutely no academic background, training, or work experience within the field of education. Moreover, she made no effort whatsoever to hide her political affiliation and aspirations on her social media pages. Consequently, I have serious concerns that this latest school board appointee will feel beholden to the county executive and not operate independently from our county government and its prevailing political views.

The purpose of a school board is to provide governance and leadership for a public school district while ensuring that its schools align with community-held values and priorities. School boards are charged with making important decisions about curriculum, budgets, personnel and policy decisions. When school board members are appointed to their positions, it can undermine public confidence, trust and transparency in the decision-making process. By contrast, when school board members are elected to their positions, they are likely to consider and address the needs of all their constituents who voted them into office.

Ideally, I would like to see all nine school board members of our county's school board be elected rather than appointed to their positions so that our school board. However, for the time being, I will settle for the implementation of this proposed change to the leadership structure of our school board, such that none of the appointees would be permitted to serve in the leadership roles of president or vice president. In my opinion, it is important for school board leadership to come from those who have an electoral mandate.

I hope that your committee will vote FAVORABLY on this bill to help make all of Maryland's county school boards more accountable to their stakeholders. This bill is a step in the right direction of strengthening democratic governance in our public education system.