

SB 099/HB 154: Open Meetings Act - County Boards of Education - Enhanced Requirements (Local Boards of Education Transparency Act): Please **SUPPORT** this bill **WITH AMENDMENTS.**

Dear Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing as a resident of Maryland to express strong support for **SB 99/HB 154**, with an Amendment regarding "...A PORNOGRAPHIC OR OBSCENE EVENT..."

Requiring live video streaming of county Board of Education open meetings and maintaining archived recordings on their websites for a minimum of five years is a meaningful step toward greater Board of Education and public accountability in local education decisions. Increased transparency helps Maryland families better understand how their tax dollars are spent and how important policies affecting students are developed.

However, I urge you to **support the bill only with a targeted amendment** regarding the editing of archived video recordings. The current language authorizes boards to edit "certain content," which could be interpreted too broadly and will undermine the transparency goals of the bill.

Specifically, I recommend adding clear language that if an archived recording is edited for a pornographic or obscene event, the board must:

- Preserve the original unedited recording;
- Make the edited version publicly available with a clear, prominent notice explaining the reason for and nature of the edit; and
- Retain the unedited version for public inspection upon reasonable request (subject to existing privacy laws, such as FERPA for student records).

This narrow amendment ensures that boards can protect the public from genuinely pornographic or obscene material that might occasionally appear in open meetings (e.g., during public comment), while preventing arbitrary or politically motivated editing that could hide legitimate debate, protests, or controversial testimony. Transparency loses its value if boards can quietly remove content they find inconvenient.

With this reasonable safeguard added, the bill strikes the right balance between openness and common-sense protections.

I respectfully urge you to **vote in favor of SB 99/HB 154 with the amendment clarifying editing standards for pornographic or obscene content.** This will deliver real transparency to Maryland families without unintended loopholes.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important education legislation.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals