



TESTIMONY FOR HB1288
County Boards of Education - Appointed Members in Leadership Positions - Prohibition

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Johnson, A

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB01288 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

One of the newest fronts in the culture wars in this country is education. There are several areas of contention that affect how our children learn and interact with others that have caused incredible dismay among parents – banning of books; teaching of history; allowing transgender students use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity; and allowing transgender students to play sports with other students of the gender they identify with. All of these are decisions that are made by the county Boards of Education.

We elect our representatives for the county Boards of Education for the express reason that local residents (especially parents) are represented in these decisions. We all understand that members of the Board must be appointed if someone who was elected cannot complete their term. However, there should not be a case where the county Board of Education is led by someone who is appointed.

This bill, if enacted, would prohibit any county Board of Education from being led by a member who is appointed. If there is currently an appointed member who is serving in a leadership position currently, they must vacate that position by August 1st of this year. If a Board of Education continues to have a member who is appointed in leadership, there are various escalating remedies, including losing funding to having the Attorney General bring suit. There is also a civil penalty for the person or persons who are continuing to stay in those positions of up to \$2,500.

Our members feel that this is important because someone who is appointed cannot speak for the residents in the same way that someone who was elected can.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.