

Dear Delegate Wilkins, Delegate Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to urge your support for **House Bill 1288**. This legislation is a critical step toward restoring accountability to our local Boards of Education and ensuring that leadership roles are held by officials directly answerable to the community.

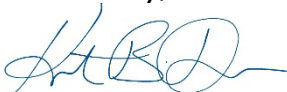
Under the current system, certain appointed board members—who are not directly elected by the public—can hold significant power over local education policy. In Harford County, for example, appointed board members have used their leadership positions to advance an agenda that is not aligned with community sentiment. A recent board decision to remove the book *Flamer* by Mike Curato was made despite strong public opposition, with 52 of 55 speakers at a board meeting opposing the ban. This highlights a disconnect between unelected leadership and the will of the constituents.

By prohibiting appointed members from holding leadership roles such as **President, Vice President, Chair, or Vice Chair**, HB 1288 ensures that those directing local education policy are elected officials. This bill provides necessary oversight and enforcement mechanisms, including:

- **Mandatory Transition:** Requiring appointed members currently in leadership positions to vacate those roles on or before August 1, 2026.
- **Written Notification:** Requiring the State Department of Education to notify a county board in writing if they violate this prohibition.
- **Funding Sanctions:** Suspending funding for administrative functions if a board does not comply with corrective actions within 30 days.
- **Transparency:** Requiring non-compliant boards to post notice of the violation on their official website.
- **Civil Penalties:** Authorizing a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 for any appointed member who "knowingly and willfully" continues to serve in a leadership position in violation of the law.

This is a common-sense measure to protect the integrity of our public education system. I respectfully request that you champion this important legislation and help secure its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kurt B. Doan', written in a cursive style.

Kurt B. Doan, Ed.D.