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Chair  
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Committee

Rules and Executive  
Nominations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 154: Open Meetings Act – County Boards of Education – Enhanced Requirements (Local Boards of Education Transparency Act)

Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman – Favorable

Thank you Madam Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Ways and Means Committee. I come before you today to discuss the Local Boards of Education Transparency Act (HB 154). This is an important next step in our continuing efforts to bring transparency and accessibility to the proceedings of our local education systems and government more broadly.

This bill serves to increase transparency among county boards of education and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners by requiring meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and live video streaming of each portion of a meeting held in open session to be made available on the county board's website. For all open meetings, local boards must livestream meetings; and then publish and maintain an archive of at least five years' worth of unedited footage.

You may recall prior legislation sponsored by Senator Kagan and myself and passed by this committee to enact something similar for local boards of elections. Unlike that effort, where there was a mix of county boards already following some of these enhanced transparency measures and some not, this bill largely codifies existing practice that makes meetings more accessible and available to the public, to a governing body that makes significant investments into our future. The streaming of meetings became typical during the height of COVID, when many currently streaming boards adopted the practice. Today, all 23 counties and Baltimore City livestream their local board of education meetings and provide archives of live streams of their board of elections meetings.

I know that the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) is interested in amendments to clarify that live streaming does not apply to certain off-site meetings or meetings that are for the sole purpose of going into executive session. While it is in the hands of this committee, I will happily work with you and them on those amendments and others they may bring forth.

The Local Board of Education Transparency Act will increase the accessibility of local boards of education and provide a means for citizens to better remain informed about their local education systems. I urge a favorable report.