

BILL: House Bill 449
TITLE: Relief From Budget Mandates
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: March 8, 2016
COMMITTEE: Appropriations Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, opposes House Bill 449. MABE is deeply concerned about the potential negative impact that this legislation would have on future funding growth for Maryland's public schools.

This bill would establish a presumptive cap on annual state budgets following FY 2018; and allow the Governor to submit budgets which include spending reductions determined by the Governor under very broad discretion granted by this legislation.

On behalf of all local boards of education, MABE fully recognizes that the bill proposes to exclude education funding and other categories of funding critical to local boards, from such cuts. However, the bill does not exclude education funding from the provision of the bill which would limit any growth in mandated funding contingent on corresponding cuts in other areas of the state budget. This provision would severely impede even modest growth in education funding in light of the fact that virtually all education funding is mandated by statutory funding formulas.

Maryland's local boards of education are entirely fiscally dependent on the revenues generated and provided by each respective local government and the state through the annual state budget. Local boards greatly appreciate the tough decisions and deep commitments of state and local officials in support of sustaining, and growing, Maryland's investment in public education. This legislation proposes limitations on future growth in state funding for education which would pose an undue burden on local school system efforts to pursue and ultimately realize meaningful growth in state funding on behalf of our 860,000 prekindergarten through 12th grade students across the state.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 449.