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**BILL:** Senate Bill 908  
**TITLE:** Harford County Board of Education - Appointment of Members - Alterations  
**DATE:** March 31, 2022  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 908.

MABE has a longstanding adopted legislation position in opposition to local bills expanding initial board appointment authority to local governments. Local boards of education are entities of the State, not the county government. Because local boards are fiscally dependent on local governments, it is appropriate that local boards remain an independent voice for the school system and that a “check-and-balance” relationship continues between local boards and their respective local governments.

Senate Bill 908, if enacted, would make the appoint process in Harford County completely inconsistent with the authority of other local governments to appoint members of local boards of education in any other jurisdiction than in Prince George’s County and Baltimore City. Of the 14 members of the Prince George’s Board of Education, only 3 members are appointed by the local government. In addition, local governments sometimes have a role in appointing members to temporarily fill a vacancy on the board of education. MABE does not believe that these “exceptions to the rule” warrant the expansion of local government appointing authority proposed for Harford County under Senate Bill 908.

MABE appreciates that there is a diverse array of approaches taken in Maryland to electing appointing members of local boards of education. However, no similar board to the Harford County Board of Education currently has any comparable role for the local government in appointing members. Of Maryland’s 24 local boards of education, eighteen are comprised entirely of locally elected members; Anne Arundel County is transitioning from an all-appointed to all-elected board; the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners is appointed by the Mayor; and four hybrid boards are comprised of both appointed and elected members. Attached is MABE’s legislative position statement on appointed, elected, and hybrid boards including the status of the composition of each board.

To be clear, MABE rarely takes positions on local bills. However, this legislation is opposed by the affected local board and clearly violates the principle of local board independence articulated in MABE’s adopted legislative positions.

For these reasons, MABE urges an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 908.