



House Bill 1181

Fairness in Negotiations Act - Sunset Repeal

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 26, 2014

From: Robin Clark

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 1181 WITH AMENDMENTS**. HB 1181 would repeal the termination of the Fairness in Negotiations Act (Chapter 325 of 2010), which established the Public School Labor Relations Board (PSLRB) to administer and enforce labor relations laws for local boards of education and their employees. The Fairness in Negotiations Act is scheduled to terminate June 30, 2015.

According to the Department of Legislative Services, county governments spent 51.1%, or \$13 billion, of their budgets to fund public schools in fiscal 2012. For most counties, education funding exceeds the funding for all other programs combined. Despite counties' role in supporting K-12 education, counties have no opportunity to directly participate in the collective bargaining negotiations that are the largest cost-drivers in the education budget. The county governing body's role lies only at the end of the process, while a proposal may have been developed and agreed to by players who are not bound by law to weigh educational investments in any budgetary or priority-setting context.

In 2010, the Maryland Association of Counties worked with the Maryland Association of Boards of Education to ensure that there was some representation for school boards on the Public School Labor Relations Board. According to the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, there are continuing concerns regarding the Board's referral of cases to the office of administrative hearings, its timeline for deciding cases, and its compliance with the Open Meetings Act. We ask that the Committee consider an amendment to this legislation that would extend the Sunset on the Board three more years, allowing the Board to work to address these issues, without prematurely removing the sunset entirely.

For these reasons, MACo recommends the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 1181.