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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
For the Hearing on
State Board of Education – Membership - Teachers and Parent
(HB 154)
February 1, 2018**

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA represents thousands of volunteer members and families in 900 public schools. For nearly 103 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Maryland PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, Maryland PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 154, State Board of Education – Membership - Teachers and Parent. This bill broadens the membership of the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE) from 11 to 14 regular members by having the Governor appoint:

- 1) Two certified teachers selected under an election process administered by MSDE and
- 2) A parent of a student enrolled in a public school in the state who is recommended by the Maryland PTA (Parent Teacher Association) – as corrected from the fiscal and policy note that states Parent Teacher Administration.

Maryland PTA recognizes that the composition of schools and classroom dynamics of education has changed dramatically from the traditional practices in which our modern-day adult generation has experienced. The diverse demographics, acknowledgement that all students can learn and strategy to teach in a manner that is inclusive as well as engaging requires a multifaceted as well as comprehensive approach to best serve students, teachers and their families. With Maryland PTA serving as a catalyst to recommend a parent advocate to serve on the Maryland State Board of Education it will not only bring very legitimate and real concerns to the state but will also foster a top-down approach of advocacy for parents, teachers and students alike.

When parent advocates of public school students serve on the State Board of Education decisions on policies and rulings will be more reflective of insightful consideration. The difference between simply a parent and a parent advocate is that parent advocates lead for all children and their families in schools and in turn, as a leader, educates and motivates others to do the same. Having a parent advocate serve on the behalf of public school parents, teachers and students is an opportunity to include a critical voice that impacts policies and rulings regarding an array of issues that public schools face daily. These issues are given a unique perspective by an active parent who is involved in a broader scope of Kindergarten thru 12th grade concerns. Not only do parent advocates represent children in schools and their families but also communities which include businesses and other partners in the community who have a vested interest in maintaining strong public schools.

The passage of this bill would be historical because Maryland would be the third state in the nation, after Massachusetts and Nevada, to require parent representation on a state board of education. Maryland PTA is eager to develop transparent, fair, and timely guidelines to identify three qualified individuals to recommend to the Governor for appointment. The State Board of Education as well as public schools will be enhanced with such membership because the experiences of a parent advocate offer a realistic approach of bringing core values of public school parents, teachers and students to the state level. It is for these reasons above that Maryland PTA encourages your vote to **SUPPORT House Bill 154**.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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