



## Support HB2908 - SB2497 Elected School Board for Chicago

**HB2908 (SB2497)** establishes an elected school board with 21 members for Chicago Public Schools starting in 2022. Voters would elect one representative from each of 20 districts and an at-large member as chair to four year terms.

### Why is this important?

- **Voters want it:** Nearly 90% of Chicago voters across the city in 2012 and 2015 voted in favor of an elected school board.
- **No taxation without representation:** CPS levies more than \$6B annually *without* the approval of any democratically elected body.
- **It's the standard statewide:** CPS is the only district statewide with a mayoral appointed board.
- **It's the standard nationwide:** 98% of all school districts have elected school boards.
- **It's the standard in large districts:** Most large school districts have elected boards. Of the ten largest school districts nationwide only three, including Chicago, have mayor-controlled boards.
- **Civil rights for voters and students of color:** Roughly 1 out of 3 Latino students and 1 out of 2 African-American students in IL attend public school in a district without an elected school board. Nearly half of IL's African-American residents cannot elect their school board, but only 13% of white IL residents cannot. The lack of an elected board disproportionately disenfranchises voters of color.

### Why the current model isn't working:

- **Lack of transparency:** Mayoral control has limited public input and accountability. Policies are enacted without genuine public input, budgets pass with little debate from the board, and capital spending happens ad-hoc and without a comprehensive plan.
- **Lack of fiscal accountability:** Instead of bringing stronger fiscal management, Mayoral control has resulted in failures to make pension payments and extensive borrowing, combined with expansion in number of schools during a period of declining enrollment. A school board is supposed to act as a watchdog to the district.
- **Corruption:** Mayoral control has not saved the district from scandal after scandal. Questionable contracts continue to be approved without scrutiny or public discussion by the board. A system of checks and balances is needed, one where board members know they will be held accountable for their decisions at the ballot box.
- **Lack of evidence:** A 2015 report from the University of Illinois at Chicago found that "There is no conclusive evidence that mayor-appointed boards are more effective at governing schools or raising student achievement."