



Hearing Testimony January 23, 2020
House Appropriations Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC

House Bill 1 – Appropriations - Built to Learn Act of 2020

SUPPORT

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, Adjunct Faculty at several Maryland colleges and universities, staff at non-profits and many other working people across the region. SEIU Local 500 believes that every Maryland child deserves a safe and healthy place in which to learn, which is why we support House Bill 1 - The Built to Learn Act. It is the position of our organization that passage of the Built to Learn Act is essential if Maryland is to provide its children the 21st century schools they need and deserve.

Our state boasts some of the best educators and sharpest students in the country. Sadly, however, our state's schools have fallen behind. Even in the wealthiest and largest school district in the state, many schools today are operating at over 120% capacity. Some have had no updates in a half century. Worse still, some students attend class in trailers because their schools lack adequate classroom space. In less wealthy localities, the need is even more dire. It was only two winters ago that Maryland made national headlines when students had to attend class in unheated schools. Children younger than ten were learning to rub their hands together to keep them from freezing rather than learning math or English. In one of the most prosperous and forward-thinking states in our country, this is inexcusable. We must do better for our children.

By passing the **Built to Learn Act** this session, we can once again make Maryland's schools among the best in the nation and provide our children with classrooms in which they can have a world-class, 21st century education. We ask for your support for HB 1 and strongly urge a favorable committee report. Thank you each for your dedication to passing this legislation, to public education, and to the children of our state – and thank you for considering our testimony.

Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC
12 Taft Court, Rockville, MD 20850
301-740-7100 www.seiu500.org
Pia Morrison, President