

TESTIMONY
OF
ZACHARY CAREY
SCIENCE TEACHER
COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS SCHOOL
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

HB 1300 / SB 1000

SUPPORT

I strongly support HB 1300 / SB 1000, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, proposing to create a world-class pre-12 public school system in Maryland.

I have worked as a middle school science teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools for the past ten years. During my career I have worked diligently to provide my students with the high quality science instruction that they deserve. I've utilized trauma-informed teaching practices and partnered with a number of organizations to bring additional resources and engaging experiences into my classroom. In doing this I'm not special. Many of the teachers I have worked with do the same. However, even with these efforts, the resources that we receive are eclipsed by our students' scope of need.

I'm excited that the Blueprint of Maryland's Future aims to appropriately fund education in our state. However, in celebrating the potential of this groundbreaking legislation I came to the realization that in my time as a teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools, I have never taught a student who was receiving a fully funded education. That's heartbreaking. To think that the students that I teach matter less than students in another district is unconscionable. Passing this bill will have an immense impact on education in Baltimore by returning funding to the under resourced communities where I have taught.

The challenge of teaching in Baltimore has been to be empathetic and responsive to the incredible traumas that my students experience, while also ensuring that my class prepares students to be academically competitive with students throughout the state and beyond. This is not only necessary for ensuring our city and state remains competitive in a global market, but also is a moral responsibility to provide equitable education for children growing up in challenging circumstances. Yet as funding for Baltimore has dwindled, my class sizes have ballooned, while class offerings and support for students have not.

This bill will work to meet that moral responsibility by providing funding for community schools and wrap around services. This will fill the gaps of need for Baltimore's most vulnerable

students. One of the most important under-addressed areas is student trauma. Based on multiple studies, including the Center for Disease Control's Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, we know that heightened levels of traumatic experiences negatively impact both academic and long-term health outcomes. Sadly, many Baltimore students that I have taught experience traumatic events at rates higher than any person should. Regardless of your position on how Baltimore should deal with its issues, we have to recognize that heightened levels of crime, substance abuse, incarceration, and poverty have burdened many of our students. And leaving this issue unaddressed is a failing of our local and state institutions to support the most disenfranchised in our city. Unfortunately, at the start of the school year, Baltimore was only receiving funds to provide trauma-sensitive programs in 5.5 percent of our schools. This bill will allow the expansion of these vitally needed programs.

Addressing the trauma Baltimore's youth have experienced will enable students to meet rigorous expectations. However, programming must be provided to allow students in all neighborhoods to have access. Lack of access has been a major issue and source of inequality for our city. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future will work to provide all students with high quality teachers and programming that will prepare students to be competitive in a global market.

Being competitive doesn't simply refer to a student's test score. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future will work to build schools that provide the opportunity for a variety of positive student outcomes by investing in strong vocational programs. Of course, our schools must provide students with the knowledge and skills to be college ready. But they also have to meet the needs of students that decide on a different path. This bill works to provide opportunities for both of those student groups.

I love teaching in Baltimore. I believe in my students and know that they are Baltimore's future. However, the challenges that building a better future for Baltimore presents are immense -- and disproportionately burden the most underserved and vulnerable. Baltimore's youth deserve an amazing education that prepares them to address these challenges. Ensuring that they are provided with the education to build a brighter future is the least we can do.

I'm here today for the students of Baltimore City. Because of this, I ask you to vote yes on HB 1300 / SB 1000.

Thank you.

Zachary Carey, District 43