



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

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Senate Bill 1000
In Support Of
Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Hearing: February 17, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

Dear Honorable Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair, and Honorable Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair, and Distinguished Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee members,

The Legislative Committee of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 1000 Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation.

SB 1000 is aimed at providing globally competitive education to all Maryland students. After careful examination of high performing school systems across the country and around the world, the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education has made recommendations that will strengthen teacher/administrator preparation, increase staff, encourage community schools, address struggling learners, English Language Learner (ELL) students, Special Education students and primary and secondary schools. It frames rigorous Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs, provides opportunities for higher salaries and focuses on subgroups/schools that perform poorly and much more. We want our students to graduate college and career ready, to be successful in their future. If we are to succeed, we must let our priorities determine our budget.

We are concerned, however, that county governments may try to find their share of the monies needed to fund this legislation by cutting the benefits (health insurance and others) our retirees worked so hard to earn. Local school systems, not the state, provide health insurance benefits to retired public school personnel. This is a hugely important benefit to all retirees. Many retired school personnel, especially former support staff, receive little to no pension because their portion of their health insurance premium costs are close to or more than what they earn in a pension each month.

Additionally, we ask that all negative effects on retirees living on small fixed incomes be considered before any taxes or fees are raised to offset the cost of the Blueprint implementation.

While we are retired and have some serious financial and personal concerns as mentioned above, we still support our public schools and want what is best for our students and active employees. As you debate this important legislation, please keep in mind the potential costs to those of us who have already given so much to the students and communities of Maryland.

On behalf of the almost 14,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 1000.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Downey
President

Virginia G. Crespo
Legislative Aide