

To Madam Chair -Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, Distinguished member of this committee and all those Gathered. My name is Broderick "Rick" Pitts, of organizing black and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools. I am a lifetime West Baltimore resident and voter in District 40. I am writing in support of HB0085

During school year 21-22 The Baltimore Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools better known as, the AROS table ventured out to talk to community members, teachers, and families about their children's education. During the time we spent on the ground we spoke to thousands and had 1200 go the extra step in voting on what we call the People's platform for education. After tallying up all votes, 5 major points stood out, Class size was a nearly unanimous response. Parents are concerned that their student won't receive enough quality instruction Time from the teachers, Teachers are overwhelmed with every aspect of their jobs do to the weight of their work load being multiplied per student and the community has deep concerns about how one individual can not only instruct a large group but also maintain a safe and healthy environment for students to learn. As a former IEP student I can assure you that heavily occupied classrooms make it virtually impossible for teachers to adhere to and implement Independent Education Plans which are legally binding documents, posing even more liability on the schools and educators.

School Safety concerns regarding school safety include but are not limited to:

- Emergency procedures (lockdown,and evacuations)
- Classroom behavior management and mitigation
- Mental and Emotional safety for students with socio-emotional differences.

Many stakeholders including some young teachers, aren't even aware that they too are powerless to effect change in the matter. Teachers look to their unions to fight for their right to a safe and healthy work environment but are stunned to discover the matter is illegal to discuss in Bargaining conversations. This matter should not only be a possibility in bargaining but it should in fact stand as a priority in bargaining. Our young people deserve a safe and healthy learning environment to arrive at daily, that can provide them with all the tools they need to succeed after leaving our campuses and school houses. The current system wont allow for that and today I ask that this prohibition be removed and the Bargaining table be opened to negotiate it. The pressures of class size impacts the entirety of our school system and I'm sure many around the state feel the same. I urge this committee to vote favorably on HB0085 without amendments.

Broderick L. "Rick" Pitts