

Testimony from Diana Desierto, Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher, District 40
Resident

HB0085/SB0206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the House Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Diana Desierto, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union. I support HB0085.

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because class size matters. Fewer class sizes means better quality education and has better long term effects on students' achievement. Having a voice at the negotiations table also encourages educators to stay as well! We deserve better working conditions!

As a 16 year City school speech language pathologist, I work with students with various communication disorders. My students, especially those with Autism, work on self advocating skills and being able to communicate their wants and needs inside the classroom. So many of my amazing and bright students are placed in classrooms where teachers are unable to handle their needs due to class size! There are classes with over 30+ students in my school. Special educators have caseloads over 30! How can a teacher implement communication strategies for children with Autism when their class size is already difficult to handle. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!! We have never had a voice in negotiating or our class size or special education caseload! Children with or without special needs deserve better. We need more support in our classrooms and ways to implement better instruction for those with special needs. Please support this bill so we can support our educators' working conditions!!

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB0085 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

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Research:

- Brookings Institute 2011: "[Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy](#)"
 - Average class size is 15.3 (based on data compiled [here](#) from National Center for Education Statistics)
 - Largest impact for class size reduction from STAR was "the positive effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys."
 - "It appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have meaningful long-term effects on student achievement and perhaps on non-cognitive outcomes."
- NCTQ 2019: "<https://www.nctq.org/blog/A-sizable-opportunity-thinking-strategically-about-class-size>"
 - "Of our sample of 124 large districts (which includes the 100 largest districts in the country and the largest district in each state), we find that almost all (82 percent) put strict limits on class sizes in at least some grades."
 - See table below for top nine districts from 2019 for average sizes by grade
 - Anne Arundel County Schools: goal for lower class size limits or goals for schools with more vulnerable student populations
- STAR, Tennessee 1980s
 - Compared classes of 15 to classes of 22, randomized groups (32% reduction)
 - Elementary students outperformed by .22 over four years, or equivalent of 3 months instruction
- SSRN, NY State: [Effect of class size on teacher attrition](#)
 - A decrease in class size from 23 to 20 students, under a district-wide policy, decreases the probability that a teacher leaves a school by 4.2 percentage points.
- 2009: NY Times: Class Size Around the World:
<https://archive.nytimes.com/economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/11/class-size-around-the-world/>

