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**Testimony in SUPPORT of
Senate Bill 377: Teacher Development and Retention Program – Definition**

Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

March 26, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on Senate Bill 377: Teacher Development and Retention Program – Definition.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state’s students. This includes a statewide teacher workforce that is racially diverse, of the highest quality, and has the autonomy to conduct deep work, as their many years of education, preparation, and certification suggest they deserve.

This bill supports the vision of the Blueprint’s second pillar by expanding opportunities and removing barriers to confront the shortage of educators and the inadequate pipeline to supply Maryland teachers. The Teacher Development and Retention Program incentivizes students to pursue a career in teaching. Currently, the program incentivizes students who are part of an institution of higher education in the State where at least 40% of the attendees receive federal Pell Grants, but fails to incentivize an important population of potential educators – students in community colleges. With this bill, students in community colleges around Maryland aiming to be educators can get the experience to enrich their educator preparation while being financially supported, allowing them to enter the teacher pipeline seamlessly.

We implore this committee to build Maryland’s teaching capacity and work to elevate the teaching profession to fulfill the promises of the Blueprint.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 377.

For more information, contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org