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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB1381 – Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Payments to Private Providers and Building Use

March 7, 2024

Chairman Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As our State and Local Governments move forward in implementing the Blueprint in our jurisdictions the Harford County Public School System and the Harford County Administration raised serious concerns primarily around the area of Pre-K funding and classroom flexibility to facilitate the expansion of Prekindergarten. I personally remember having many conversations during the development of the Blueprint and the importance of establishing a partnership with the private sector to accommodate children in PreK. This partnership currently does not exist because it is simply not profitable for the private sector to get involved. However, it is of high importance and a necessary partnership, that will administer an adequate amount of financial support and space that is needed for expansion.

HB1381 addresses these concerns and ensures that children have access to quality prekindergarten education in both private and public institutions. The bill will alter the definition of prekindergarten enrollment for private prekindergarten providers, requiring the State Department of Education to forward fund the State and local share or provide a pay guarantee of not greater than a certain period for certain prekindergarten funding.

Furthermore, the bill will also authorize a county board of education and eligible private kindergarten provider to utilize certain spaces for prekindergarten and apply for funding for prekindergarten spaces. This will allow private prekindergarten providers to partner with the State or county government to address physical space constraints.

I respectfully request a FAVORABLE report from the committee.

Sincerely,

Delegate Teresa E. Reilly