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## THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN SB426 EDUCATION - MARYLAND STEM PROGRAM – ESTABLISHED

Rapid technological advancements are our daily reality. To maintain our leadership in science and technology discovery, we must create an approach to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education that prepares and advances students for this future.<sup>1</sup> Our communities must continue to develop students who are skilled in these fields and invest in new research and innovation infrastructures that is inclusive. SB426 is a creative solution to preparing all students for a future in these fields, while incentivizing professionals who teach STEM.

The unfortunate reality for many teachers is that they often look for a second job to make ends meet. Frequently, these supplemental jobs have little connection to their professional field. SB426 provides an opportunity for additional compensation for retired and current public school teachers to teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at non-public schools. This legislation, that benefits all stakeholders, duplicates an existing program that has had proven implementation success in New Jersey.

There are many reasons why students attend a nonpublic school and families of all backgrounds and economic levels choose this option to best serve their child's unique needs. While acknowledging that there exists some ideological opposition for funding for nonpublic schools, we structured this program so all funding flows through public school districts, with no public funds transferring to nonpublic school coffers. This program directly serves interest of public school district in many ways:

- By increasing the earning opportunity for public school STEM professionals, it potentially eases recruitment and retention of STEM teachers in these districts by giving the opportunity for public school teachers to teach after the school day ends.
- Increases the supply of STEM teachers, easing the STEM teacher scarcity that is being felt nationwide.
- By including retired public school STEM teachers as eligible, we will be facilitating recruitment of teachers back into the workforce, further easing staffing shortages

Incentivizing retired teachers to return to the workforce and allowing current teachers to supplement their income within their professional field is a win-win. This program not only benefits the students in nonpublic schools, but benefits our community by exposing ALL students to high quality STEM education, and supports public schools by making it easier to recruit and retain quality teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> National Science Foundation. *STEM Education for the Future- A Visioning Report*. 2020. <https://www.nsf.gov/edu/Materials/STEM%20Education%20for%20the%20Future%20-%202020%20Visioning%20Report.pdf>

We have offered amendments to address some concerns of MSEA and PSSAM:

1. Limiting participation in the STEM Program to those schools that are already participating in the nonpublic school textbook program.
2. Specifying that the nonpublic school shall assume general liability for the teachers who are participating in the program on their premises.
3. Ensuring that nonpublic schools shall assume responsibility for curricular integration and education outcomes.
4. Providing current public-school teachers pay at their public-school salary rate.
5. Protecting unintended retirement compensation complications.
6. Ensuring MSDE has flexibility to design a teacher notification process that minimizes any administrative burden on public schools.

In addition to these amendments, we are open to including a pass-through fee for MSDE to cover any costs of administering this program.

This legislation allows retired teachers to re-enter the field and provides opportunities for current teachers to make extra income after regular school hours, making sure they are compensated at their current rate. It supports *all* students by teaching essential skills in STEM by experts in field. For students to compete in today's hi-tech economy, our state cannot afford for *anyone* to fall behind. For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report.