

SHANEKA HENSON  
Legislative District 30A  
Anne Arundel County

Ways and Means Committee

Joint Committee on  
Children, Youth, and Families



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 154  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3045 · 301-858-3045  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3045  
Shaneka.Henson@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 657**  
Anne Arundel County - Student Loan Assistance Repayment Program for  
Educators - Established

Chair Brian J. Feldman  
Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,**

I am writing to provide my testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 657, which authorizes Anne Arundel County to establish a Student Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) for educators employed by the Anne Arundel County Public School System. As a co-sponsor of this bill alongside Senator Dawn Gile, I believe that this legislation is crucial for addressing the pressing need to recruit and retain qualified educators, particularly those who reflect the diversity of our student population.

The primary aim of Senate Bill 657 is to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse pool of educators who are committed to serving our students. By providing assistance in repaying higher education loans for educators who meet certain eligibility criteria, such as committing to five years of service, we can make teaching positions more financially attractive and demonstrate our commitment to supporting our valued educators.

It is imperative that our teacher workforce mirrors the diversity of our student population. Research consistently shows that students benefit from having teachers who share their cultural background and life experiences. Senate Bill 657 aligns with this research by incentivizing diverse educators to join and remain in our school system, ultimately enriching the educational experience for all students.

Furthermore, by offering loan repayment assistance, we send a clear message that we value the contributions of our educators and recognize the financial challenges they face. Teaching is a noble profession, but it often comes with significant student loan debt. This program will alleviate some of that burden, making it easier for educators to focus on their important work in the classroom.

While implementing such a program will require an increase in county expenditures for loan repayment assistance, the long-term benefits far outweigh the costs. Investing in high-quality teachers not only improves student outcomes but also strengthens our community as a whole. Similar programs implemented in other counties and at the state level have demonstrated success in attracting professionals to high-need areas and underserved communities. Senate Bill 657 adapts this concept specifically for recruiting and retaining teachers in Anne Arundel County.

In conclusion, I urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to give Senate Bill 657 a favorable report. By supporting this bill, we are investing in the future of our students and our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SHAN', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Hon. Delegate Shaneka Henson