

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 377
Higher Education - Teacher Development and Retention Program – Definition

Asia Lee, Aspiring Educator

Position: Support of Senate Bill 377

Members of the Committee,

My name is Asia Lee. I was a student at the Essex Campus of Community College of Baltimore County, or CCBC for short, for 2 years. After graduating with an associate degree in Elementary Education, I transferred to Towson University to complete and receive my bachelor's degree in this area of study. Going to school at a community college, in high school at least, was considered “against the grain,” was looked down upon, and often wasn’t recognized as a suitable option after graduation. But I loved my community college experience. I was in the Honors College, which is a program that provides more rigorous classes. I was also featured in the College Tour, a show that provides an inside look into colleges around the world. I was able to talk about my major and what I gained out of my time at CCBC. One thing I did not touch on was the internship during the end of my time at CCBC Essex.

Balancing my classes, my internship, and my job proved challenging for me. I had to make sacrifices at my job and cut back on days at work to fulfill the requirements of the internship. On top of that, I was balancing 5 other classes. It would cause me a lot of stress and anxiety planning out my days and making sure everything was done on time. Pro Tip: Invest in a planner. Having a planner allowed me to track my workload for classes, internship assignments for the class, and time served during this internship. I would have to factor in lesson planning as well. All of this, for free.

I was fortunate to be living with my parents, who can provide for me and my two other sisters. But for many other educators, this is not the case. Many people in my program would talk about how they must get side jobs on top of schooling and even expect to have one as they enter their teaching career. Last year, the General Assembly created the Teacher Development and Retention Program, which would provide stipends to help future educators continue in their programs and internships. But many students like me would not be able to participate because they started at their local community college.

I want to use this platform to speak up for them. I want students after me to find that they don’t have to settle for a job or major they don’t want simply because funding was not provided for them. I want students to be able to embrace their passion to educate and provide for themselves and/or their families. I wholeheartedly believe that if you value something, you will invest in it. And if you value the educators in Maryland, then please support Senate Bill 377.