



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 7, 2024

SENATE BILL 426

EDUCATION - MARYLAND STEM PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED

TESTIMONY OF RABBI ARIEL SADWIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AGUDATH ISRAEL OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland, and on behalf of the 10,000 students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state. Agudath Israel of Maryland issues this testimony in support of Senate Bill 426.

Senate Bill 426 would establish the Maryland STEM Program to enhance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in our state by providing additional compensation to current or retired public school teachers for teaching STEM classes at local nonpublic schools. The importance of a proper STEM education is widely acknowledged as a vital component to a well-rounded elementary and secondary educational experience. Oftentimes, schools struggle to find competent, high-quality teachers willing to take the burdensome (though ultimately rewarding) task of instructing young students in these subjects. Helping all our Maryland schools to engage experienced, seasoned educators can help ensure all young Marylanders receive the proper grounding necessary for their future success.

In addition to empowering students, the Maryland STEM Program provides worthy benefits to public school educators by providing an additional source of income, thus ensuring their financial security. Retired public school teachers would be able to continue their life work of educating our youth even after moving on from full-time teaching.

The public and nonpublic schools that comprise Maryland's K-12 educational system share the mission of providing a proper education to *all* Maryland students. We respectfully ask the committee members to continue this shared partnership, and ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 426.