



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

House Environment and Transportation

HOUSE BILL 69: Community Development Administration - Live Near Where You Teach Program - Establishment

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2024

POSITION: In Favor

The Baltimore Teachers Union is in favor of House Bill 69, Authorizing the Community Development Administration in the Department of Housing and Community Development to administer a home buyer assistance program, a rental assistance program, and certain community development projects that assist certain school staff members with the purchase or rental of homes near where the school staff member is employed

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,811 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

This innovative initiative aims to address a critical concern within our education system - the housing challenges faced by school staff members. As representatives of the teachers union, we firmly believe that implementing this program will have a positive impact on both the educational workforce and the communities they serve. Our educators are the backbone of our education system, and their commitment to nurturing the next generation is unparalleled. However, the increasing difficulty in finding affordable housing near their workplace poses a significant obstacle to their well-being and, consequently, their ability to deliver the best education to our students.

When educators live in close proximity to their schools, they become more engaged members of the community. Increased community engagement fosters stronger relationships between educators, students, and parents, leading to a more collaborative and supportive learning

environment. Shorter commutes result in less stress and more time for personal and professional development. By addressing the housing challenges faced by our educators, we contribute to their overall well-being, enabling them to be more effective in their roles.

In conclusion, the "Live Near Your Work" incentive program is a crucial step towards ensuring a stable, satisfied, and engaged educational workforce. By investing in our educators' well-being and addressing the housing challenges they face, we are not only supporting them individually but also contributing to the overall improvement of our education system.

The Baltimore Teachers Union urges the esteemed members of this committee to consider the immense positive impact this program could have on our schools, educators, and communities. Your support for the "Live Near Your Work" incentive program will undoubtedly enhance the educational experience for our students and strengthen our commitment to fostering excellence in education.