

Testimony - HB 1157 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant - Favorable  
House Ways & Means Committee  
February 21, 2024  
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Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

We at SEIU Local 500 represent over 20,000 members who teach Marylanders from their early childhoods to their careers and beyond. Many of our members are educational support professionals serving as paraeducators in Montgomery County public schools. Often these members serve vital roles in students' education and many seek professional growth within the classroom.

HB 1157 by establishing a grant program for school systems to ensure educational support professionals transition to full-time teachers without a loss of income while they are focusing on their studies is vital to meeting the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The facts are simple, we need more teachers and we simply do not have enough college-bound high school graduates majoring in teaching right now. What we do have in Maryland is an existing workforce of professionals who already serve in an educational setting interacting and helping students everyday. Being able to meet the lofty goals set forward by the Blueprint means utilizing every available resource including helping paraeducators become teachers.

We ask for your favorable report on 1157 as it has our full support and we know it will go along way towards shaping Maryland's educational future.