



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Suite A • Odenton, Maryland 21113

Phone: 410.551.1517 • Email: mrspa@mrspa.org

Website: www.mrspa.org

House Bill 0352
Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025
In Opposition Of
Appropriations Committee
Hearing: February 27, 2025

Dear Honorable Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair, and Honorable Delegate Mark Chang, Vice Chair, and other distinguished members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) stands firmly opposed to House Bill 0352 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025.

While we understand fully that there is a budget deficit, and that difficult decisions will have to be made, we do not agree that shifting more of the cost of providing a pension for public school system and community college employees to the 23 counties and Baltimore City is a proper or right way to balance the budget. Neither do we believe that removing the supplemental funding that was promised to the counties and City in 2011 to offset funding the pension cost shifting that was done then in response to the Great Recession is the proper or right thing to do. This serious reduction of funding and cost shifting will result in over \$100 million dollars of losses to jurisdictions already dealing with the increased costs of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and other inflationary operating costs, many of whom are already struggling to provide Maintenance of Effort for their school systems.

Legislators may think that the 24 local jurisdictions will simply raise taxes to ensure that pension costs are funded and that the other costs of the Blueprint are fully funded. Nothing is further from the truth. Asking them to pick up a tab that you promised to cover back in 2011 is unfair. Local budgets are also stretched to the limit.

We also remind you that the health benefits of retired school personnel are provided by local school systems. Should those systems have to cut people or programs to cover this new cost shifting and the loss of the supplemental payment for pensions, we are concerned that our health insurance will be affected as we have no collective bargaining authority or protections. It is difficult to say what people and programs might be cut at the school system or county government level if they must come up with hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars to cover costs that you previously promised you would cover, but there will undoubtedly be deep cuts. In addition, we are deeply concerned about the anticipated effects of decisions being made at the federal level and their impact on the Maryland economy.

On behalf of the almost 12,000 members of MRSPA, we implore you to keep your promise to us and to the active employees of our school systems by opposing HB 0352.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H. Weller

Virginia G. Crespo

President

Legislative Aide