



Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I write in support of Maryland HB856 and its inclusion of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Educator Identification Clearinghouse as part of Maryland's educator screening process.

The NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse has served state licensing agencies since 1985. Its purpose is straightforward and prudent: to allow jurisdictions to see whether an individual has had an administrative action taken against his or her educator's license prior to the issuance of a license in another state. It is not a criminal database. It contains administrative actions—disciplinary measures taken under a state's educator licensure statutes and regulations. These actions vary by state. One state may only have the authority to revoke a license, while another may admonish, suspend, or revoke. Importantly, most educator misconduct cases are addressed through administrative hearings—not criminal court. If an educator is not arrested or fingerprinted, there will be no record in a state or federal criminal background check. Even when misconduct is based on a criminal conviction, a criminal background report will not explain what action was taken against the educator's license. The Clearinghouse fills that critical gap.

The Clearinghouse functions as an early-warning system. It allows a state educator licensing agencies, school district, or educator preparation provider to quickly check whether an adverse action has occurred and then contact the reporting jurisdiction for more details. It is not designed to be the sole basis for licensure issuance, employment or admission decision. Rather, it alerts decision-makers that further inquiry is warranted. By including the Clearinghouse in its background screening process, a school district can make better, more informed hiring decisions and reinforce its risk management plan. Access is practical and affordable. All 50 states, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Ontario, British Columbia, and Guam contribute data. Local education agencies and educator preparation providers may access the system by joining NASDTEC as an associate member and paying a modest subscription fee.

Each year, approximately 6,100 educators nationwide have adverse actions taken against their licenses. When considering there are roughly 3.5 million public school educators, plus those in private, parochial, and charter schools in the United States, the vast majority are dedicated professionals who do what is good and beneficial for students each day—much like the countless drivers who follow the rules of the road, the doctors we trust with our health, and the bankers we trust with our finances.

But the small percentage matters. It is not uncommon for an educator who has had adverse action taken in one state to seek employment, certified, classified, or even volunteer, in another state, or to apply for admission to another educator preparation program. Without access to administrative action information, hiring entities may unknowingly place students at risk. We also recognize the realities: some incidents go unreported; some cases are dropped because victims are unwilling to testify or evidence is insufficient; and some accused individuals are ultimately exonerated. The Clearinghouse does not prejudge. It simply promotes transparency and due diligence during the hiring process.

Maryland HB856 strengthens student protection while respecting due process. It does not assume guilt. It does not replace criminal background checks. It complements them. By incorporating the NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse into Maryland's screening framework, this legislation provides school systems with a more complete picture before making decisions that affect children.

The vast majority of educators honor their calling with integrity. This bill supports them by upholding the profession's standards and reinforcing public trust. For the safety of Maryland's students and the integrity of the educator workforce, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB856.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Adams  
Executive Director  
NASDTEC



