

SB 0062

February 6, 2020

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Caroline Schmidt, Executive Board Member, Baltimore Teachers Union

RE: SENATE BILL 0062 – Labor and Employment - Secure Maryland Wage Act

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee. On behalf of the union's more than 7,000 members, I am pleased to issue my support for SB62.

Teachers and school staff know that the most pressing challenge faced by parents of students in the Baltimore school system is the need for a good job that provides livable wages and meaningful benefits.

The Secure Maryland Wage Act is an opportunity to raise jobs standards at locations that are major economic drivers in our communities and where large portions of workers are Baltimore City residents.

Raising standards will also help to promote greater workforce retention - just as it does for teachers¹ – which in these heightened security locations means a better trained, more experienced and higher performing workforce.²

Quality jobs in our communities, or the lack thereof, have a ripple effect into our school system. When parents are paid poverty level wages, students come to school have skipped meals and are unable to concentrate. And when parents are forced to work multiple jobs, they have less time to physically invest in their children's development – be it helping with homework or attending to their emotion and behavioral health. Unfortunately there is no doubting the broad body of research that finds a direct link between household income and student's educational outcomes.³

To truly invest in our children's future we must invest in both our education system and in the hardworking parents who send their children to our schools. In a state as wealthy as Maryland there is no excuse why we cannot do both.

I strongly urge you to stand with the thousands of teachers who want the best for workers in our communities and to give this bill your strongest support.

¹ See <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/06/14/452130/fact-sheet-yes-increase-salaries-teachers/>

² See <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2017/SFO-literature-review.pdf>

³ See for example <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/#epi-toc-5>