
**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1628
Sales and Use Tax - Rate Reduction and Services**

**House Ways and Means Committee
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1:00 PM**

**Sean Johnson
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1628, legislation that will reduce the state's sales tax rate and expand it to professional services.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Over the last three years, educators across the state have been fully engaged in the most critical conversation we have had in a generation: how do we fundamentally, equitably, and sustainably improve our schools and prepare our students for the jobs of today and the future. From the beginning, this conversation has appropriately been focused on research-based best practices to develop the policy reforms necessary to make this happen. And from the beginning, it has been clear that supporting these world-class schools and programs would require new investments in state and local funding.

Now that House Bill 1300, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, has been introduced, the time to act to make this vision for our schools a reality is now. Our kids can't wait; passing the Blueprint is both an economic and moral imperative. Every student in every neighborhood in Maryland should have a great public school and the opportunity to succeed. Voting to pass the Blueprint alone will not make this happen; we must also fully fund the legislation as well. A policy bill and new formulas without the resources to deliver them will not result in the outcomes that Marylanders expect and students deserve.

House Bill 1628 is a single action the legislature can take to generate the revenues necessary to fund the Blueprint and does so while also reducing taxes on goods that absorb so much of the budgets of middle-class and lower-income Marylanders. While this fair and comprehensive proposal is not the only smart revenue measure MSEA supports, this legislation and the goals that it meets to fully fund the state share of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future earns our full support. The certainty that fully funding the Blueprint this year would create for school systems will ease implementation and planning of the new programs that it will create and will put the state budget on stable footing for years to come.



Supporting our schools requires strong action to meet the urgency of this moment. Passing and fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is the strong action that will yield immense benefits for our schools, our economy, and the next generation of Marylanders. Thank you for your support of our schools, educators, and students.

MSEA requests a favorable report on House Bill 1628 and asks that the committee continue to work with educators and other public school advocates to make the necessary decisions to fund the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.