



Subject: Favorable Support for SB720

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

From: Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

**Contact: Sharon Maneki, Director of Legislation and Advocacy
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
9013 Nelson Way
Columbia, MD 21045
Phone: 410-715-9596
Email: nfbmdsm@gmail.com**

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The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland, the oldest and largest consumer organization of blind persons in the state, urge the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to give a favorable report on SB720, a bill to create a pay plan for the salaries of teachers and other professionals at the Maryland School for the Blind.

The Maryland School for the Blind is a unique educational institution because it serves students who are not only blind but have additional disabilities. These students need specialized services from psychologists and occupational speech and physical therapists. At the school, they receive instruction from vision teachers and other assistants so that they may become as independent as possible. Students at the Maryland School for the Blind are not able to attend their local school system because of the level of specialized instruction that they need.

The payment plan proposed in SB720 will ensure that the school can recruit, hire, and maintain the professional talent that it needs to provide the specialized instruction and services required for these students. This bill also offers greater consistency in funding for the school which will improve the operation of the school. Students at the Maryland School for the Blind are entitled to a high quality education. Your vote in favor of SB720 is an important step in making this quality education possible.