

**BILL:** HB 1322 - Primary and Secondary Education - School Personnel - Prohibition on Retaliation for Not Returning to In-Person Instruction and Work

**SPONSOR:** Delegate Alonzo Washington

**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

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Friday, March 26, 2021

### HB 1322

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. We are writing in favor of HB 1322.

The Maryland Student Coalition (“MSC”) supports House Bill 1322, which “prohibits the Governor, the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education, a county superintendent, or a county board of education from disciplining, suspending, terminating, or otherwise retaliating against school personnel who choose not to return to a school building for in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year.” Additionally, HB 1322 provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protections, allowing school personnel to instruct and work remotely, to the extent practicable, during the 2020-2021 school year.

As students, it is essential that our educators are at their best, and with the continuation of the COVID-19 health emergency, we must protect the most vulnerable. This bill is a pragmatic approach towards protecting educators from being open to unsafe working conditions. HB 1322 specifically provides these protections to staff that are at least 65 years old, have an underlying medical condition that puts them at increased risk from COVID-19, lives with someone who does, has not received the full course of the vaccine, or chooses not to return to the school building for in-person instruction. The health of the students heavily correlates with the health of our educator, it is important the state takes steps to protect both.

For the reasons stated above, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1322.