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Support for HB 724

As the Chair of the Friends of MANSEF and the parent of a 16-year-old girl with multiple disabilities who attends St. Elizabeth School, an approved nonpublic special education school in Baltimore City, to request your support on HB724. This bill will provide missed transition services to students affected by the pandemic regardless of their aging out or graduation requirement status.

Natalie is diploma bound, but her multiple disabilities mean she needs to take advantage of every moment and opportunity to be able to meet the graduation requirements including work experience.

For Natalie, we know the transition years are actually a small window of time during which she must work very hard to gain the knowledge and skills which will make or break her ability to be successful later in life. Natalie was scheduled to begin working at the retail establishment, Old Navy, this past year when the pandemic hit. She had meticulously and diligently worked at learning to fold clothes which for her means mastering the use of a folding apparatus due to gross and fine motor issues. She has a great interest in fashion and was excitedly looking forward to on-site training in the retail environment.

When the pandemic hit, this opportunity ended. This real-world experience, which for her holds immense value that cannot be underestimated, is now lost. She is a visual, tactile learner and an extremely hard worker. Her success and that of so many students like her, is tied to these real-world experiences. If our students are not able to make up these valuable missed transition opportunities, their future quality of life will be seriously undermined. These transition services are life changing and also afford special needs students the opportunity to be independent, contributing members of the community which is a benefit to society as well. It is for these very important reasons that our network of parents asks for your vote to support HB 724.

Sincerely,

Lisa Halpin  
Parent and Howard County resident  
Chair – Friends of MANSEF

