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Ways and Means Committee

Education Subcommittee

Finance Resources Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 12, 2021

**In Support of HB 724 – Special Education – Education and Vocational Services –
Prolonged School Closure**

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of HB 724. This is an emergency bill that requires extension of transition services for special education students who would otherwise be graduating this year but have not been able to access their job coaching and appropriate transition services due to the pandemic shutdown. It is not mandatory for students, but would be an available option for all students who meet this criteria. The Federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities that are designed to be results-oriented to facilitate a student's movement from school to post-school activities including employment and independent living, vocational training and must include instruction, community experiences, and the development employment and post-school adult living objectives. Simply put, this is the portion of the law that states we have the responsibility to adequately prepare graduating special education students for their futures.

All students were impacted by the pandemic school shutdown this year, but few were so hard hit as this cohort of students who were actively participating in job coaching and post-school planning experiences and were unable to continue due to safety concerns. While transition experiences look different for all students, they generally include community immersion and on-the-job training. Little of this was available during the past year, leaving this cohort of students unprepared and without the necessary training and experience to join the work force. Despite this, many of them will be forced to graduate in two months because they have aged out or completed other graduation requirements.

That is why I am asking for a favorable report on HB 724- designed to offer these students little more time to prepare for the adult world by allowing them access to the in-person transition services they missed in 2020.

Sincerely,

Delegate Michele Guyton