

Feb 10, 2021

**Written Testimony in FAVOR of House Bill 0724: Special Education - Education and Vocational Services - Prolonged School Closure**

To: Ways and Means Committee - Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0724.

Dear Senator Kaiser and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

We ask that you support Maryland families by voting in *favor* of this legislation which will benefit students with disabilities.

While virtual learning during the time of COVID has been detrimental for students of all abilities, it has been especially so for children with special needs.

Sixteen hours of distance learning per week cannot replace 30 hours of direct, in-person instruction. Nor can it replace those therapies which benefit so many of our students. Physical, speech and occupational therapy are just some of the essential services which cannot be effectively delivered via a remote classroom.

This coming March it will be one year since students lost the educational benefit of attending school in person. If passed, this bill will help bridge the considerable learning gap that our special education students have fallen into.

*Please vote in favor of HB0724.*

Sincerely,

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&

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