

16 March 2021

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee,

I am writing in support of HB 1355 - Primary and Secondary Education - Repeating Previous Grade Level - Authorization (Education Recovery Act of 2021)

Position: Favorable OR Favorable with amendments

It is my belief that ALL students, regardless of category, should be given the option to repeat the coursework for the grade level they were in for the 2020-2021 school year.

As you are well aware, this school year has been less than ideal for many students. While some have thrived, others, like my son, have not. My son was an A/B student prior to this year. This year he is barely passing his classes, despite his own heroic efforts, as well as those of his teachers and parents. He is a student who really needs to be educated in person.

When the pandemic hit, my son's services and education shifted to a fully remote format. This has been extremely challenging for us, as my son has a seizure disorder, and when he is on the computer all day, his seizure threshold is much lower than normal. He simply cannot attend classes 6 hours a day. It is too exhausting for him, and not worth the increased risk of having seizures.

If he were allowed to attend school for another year, I know it would benefit him. Indeed, I've written to my state delegates and senator to let them know that I am also in favor of HB0724, which will guarantee services to students set to graduate in June 2021. I believe both bills are necessary. HB 1355 guarantees that all students (regardless of grade level) can receive the education they may have missed this last year due to the requirements that instruction be delivered online.

I am grateful for your willingness to consider moving this bill favorably out of committee and on to a vote on the House floor as quickly as possible so that schools and families will be able to appropriately plan for an addition year of education to replace the education they may not have been able to access last year.

Sincerely,  
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District 22

Current Bill Text with suggested amendments (strikeouts) included:

...That, for the 2021-2022 school year, on request of the student, parent, or guardian, ~~the following~~ students may repeat the grade level they were in during the 2020-2021 school year, regardless of the student's age or whether the student has already

completed all promotion or graduation requirements for the grade level the student seeks to repeat:

- ~~—(1) special education students;~~
- ~~—(2) students with disabilities;~~
- ~~—(3) students from families where English is not the primary language;~~
- ~~—(4) students who are eligible for free or reduced price meals;~~
- ~~—(5) students who are attending a school that is eligible for a concentration of poverty grant; and~~
- ~~—(6) struggling learners, as defined in § 5-226 of the Education Article, who require transitional supplemental instruction.~~