

HB 1322  
OPPOSE  
Tara Battaglia  
Carroll County Board of Education

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you as parent of the Carroll County community and as a member of the Carroll County Board of Education. I am opposed to House Bill 1322. This bill would cause extreme hardships to families of children who are trying to return to work. If there are not enough teachers to teach, students would be forced to remain home, and so would the parents. You can not get the economy running with parents that need to work outside of the home. Not every job can be worked from home, and this is the situation for many middle class parents. Many of those middle class parents have been working in the actual public during this pandemic. They do what they need to do and what is asked of them by their employer. It's quite basic. Families don't get a paycheck if they don't work. Please don't get me wrong, many teachers have been doing a really difficult job, but they are privileged with the opportunity to work remotely while parents that are considered essential that work in grocery stores, hospitals, department stores, manufacturing; are confronted with the public every single day and will never know if they have been subjected to COVID because contact tracing does not count if you just pass a person in an aisle. I myself have been working this entire pandemic with the general public, and I gladly do it everyday because I am privileged to have a job. So many are not so privileged and they no longer qualify for unemployment. In an age where we hear about equity, virtual learning is not equitable! With internet rates rising, lack of internet service in many homes, and children needing classroom instruction, we need to remember that children should come first and for some reason when it comes to education, they are just looked at as dollar signs and end up coming last because there is concentration of adults and their wellbeing. I am very empathetic to those that have true underlying conditions. It is absolutely understandable. We have been told to wear the damn mask. We have been told to wash our hands. We have been told to social distance as much as we can. After all, many don't have a problem going to the store and touching the pin pad at the register right after the person did in front of them, but for some reason schools are the "unsafe place". Enough is enough. The children of Maryland should be a priority and get them back to the classroom. The children and in person education needs to be the priority. If I don't do my job, I don't have one. Simple as that. If grocery store workers don't do their job, we would go without food. If nurses and doctors don't do their job, our healthcare would be terminal. If children do not have an equitable education, they can not exceed in life and can not contribute to society. Let the local school systems decide if an individual meets the qualifications to take leave, and hold their employees accountable. If the state wishes to tell local school boards what they can and can not do regarding staff, maybe the staff should become state employees so they can have the privileges of other state employees like medical benefits, retirement, and raises. Everyone needs to return to the school buildings. If you took advantage of receiving a vaccine, you need to return to the actual school building. Our future depends on it, and so do our children.

Tara Battaglia