

Bill: HB1355
Position: Favorable

March 16, 2021

Our family is in support of HB1355. COVID has created a new and stressful environment for everyone but especially families of school age students. We have all had to learn to adapt to every changing situations. Part of the new role for parents of school age children has been to serve as full-time educator. While some students have flourished with virtual instruction, others have not. Some students who did well using virtual instruction did so because of the lack of socialization and the ability to be in a very controlled environment. While this may be beneficial academically, it does not work towards full participation in their community and the necessary skills to be successful in life.

Through the Education Recovery Act of 2021, families would have control over their child's school grade level during the upcoming school year. Parents have had to quit their jobs to be at home with their children, others have had to leave their children at home without adult supervision to manage virtual instruction.

My daughter, a single parent who has been considered an essential employee since the very beginning of pandemic. We have done our best despite CDC and State guidelines to support her and her son. He is a Harford County middle school student who has struggled with virtual instruction from the beginning. At the end of this semester's 2nd quarter, he was failing every subject. There has been a lot in the news recently about a student being passed each year who did not have the academic achievement to support that decision. I believe this is not an isolated issue. Without the necessary basic skills he should have gained this school year, to promote my grandson to the next grade is a disservice to him.

Parents should have the deciding control over if their child is promoted or retained at the end of this school year. Without significant academic tutoring over the summer being offered by schools, there will be students who would be best serviced by repeating the current year.

Thank you for your consideration in supporting HB1355.

Sincerely,

Faith Rattman