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The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 2, 2022

Senate Bill 706 – Nonpublic Educational Programs - Children With Disabilities - Costs of Teacher Salaries- FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe and members of the committee,

I am writing as the Chief Legal Officer of The Children's Guild to express our strong support of SB706 Non-Public Disabilities Cost of Teacher's Salaries. The Children's Guild is a leading Mid-Atlantic nonprofit organization serving children, families, and child-serving organizations dedicated to transforming the way America cares for and educates its children through education, career services, and behavioral health. The organization currently has three non-public school programs in the state of Maryland.

Senate Bill 706 will provide students with disabilities who have the most critical and complex needs that were not able to be met in the public school system, the ability to have access to specialized environments and educators to meet those needs in the nonpublic school setting. While The Children's Guild requires competent, knowledgeable, and well-trained special educators in the classroom, it is difficult to attract and retain high quality nonpublic teachers due to the pay disparity between nonpublic and public schools. State funding for pay parity will ensure teacher retention

as well as establish structured, consistent, predictable learning environments for our special needs students.

Additionally, the Children's Guild agrees with MANSEF that for nonpublic schools to meet the high expectations and standards set under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the current workforce shortage is an issue that must be addressed by the state. The funding formula for the increased salaries must be provided by the state to ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Pay parity for non-public teachers is the only appropriate path for Maryland to offer fair and high-quality educational options for Maryland's children and families. Therefore, The Children's Guild respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 706.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Neal". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Kimberly H. Neal, Esquire
Chief Legal Officer