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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the  
Senate  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**

**Student Data Privacy – Protections, Digital Tools, and Student Data Privacy  
Council (SB 325)**

**February 3, 2022**

**SUPPORT**

I support Senate Bill 325, Student Data Privacy – Protections, Digital Tools, and Student Data Privacy Council (SB 325).

I appreciate Maryland PTA and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for the opportunity to serve on the Student Data Privacy Council as the parent representative since 2019. My time on the Student Data Privacy Council has been insightful, and I am glad that I was able to collaborate with State officials, industry experts, and educators on this especially important piece of legislation.

SB325 will enhance current law to provide increased protections for student privacy and the information that data operators or third-party vendors acquire from schools, parents, or students that is intended to facilitate the educational process. It also requires each county board of education to provide a list of digital tools to MSDE so that information on those tools can be published for the public. The bill also extends the existence of Student Data Privacy Council for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the law.

The work of the Student Data Privacy Council began before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. And, while the pandemic did not slow the work, it highlighted the need to ensure the

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privacy of our children is protected. For a school year, our public schools were in a distance learning posture, and a lot of student data and information was transferred over the internet.

As a parent of the public-school student in the State of Maryland, I appreciate and understand the need for distance learning during these times. While I agree with the use of technology to deliver educational instruction for the safety and health of children and educators, we cannot ignore the potential harm that can result from hackers or persons with malicious intentions. The recent victimization of government agencies by internet criminals makes it extremely important that we protect our children.

There have been numerous stories and reports about the sex offenders who use the internet to gain access to children. However, we overlook the offenders who could hold student information for ransom. If hackers would threaten to release police personnel files for money, why wouldn't they do the same with student records?

SB325 will enhance the protection of our innocent children's information that is exchanged with third-party educational operators for a good reason. It requires vigilance to ensure student data is never placed at risk. Additionally, because the law does not give parents any means of redress if their child's private information is compromised, SB325 is essential.

Since the pandemic has solidified technology's place in the educational process, we must ensure our children's private, educational information is protected. I encourage the Committee to return a favorable report on SB325 and encourage the Senate to pass it this session.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Moissette I. Sweat". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Moissette I. Sweat, Esquire  
Parent Representative, Student Data Privacy Council, 2019-2022