



## **Maryland's Voice for Nonpublic Education**

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## HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

### HOUSE BILL 737

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION OPTIONS – RIGHT TO LEARN AND BROADENING  
OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TODAY PROGRAMS

### SUPPORT

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of roughly 120,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

Our children, the future of society, are our most vital asset and require the greatest investments towards ensuring their ability to succeed. By educating them properly we are giving them the tools they will need to develop, to build, to lead, and to guide. The various mediums of schooling are in place to enable each child to pursue the education most suitable for them.

In Maryland, most children will receive a public education. The funding for such an item is so vital that the state allocates more than \$8 billion for it. For some families, a nonpublic education is what they deem to be more suitable. The state invests modestly in several programs that benefit nonpublic schools as well – totaling approximately \$23 million. Others view homeschooling as the path to educational success.

Due to a variety of factors, not all public schools are able to perform to the necessary level and end up not serving its students as necessary. Students in those challenging situations deserve to be served better. They should not be subject to those confines and limitations.

House Bill 737 is designed to address this need by offering students a couple of different options if their public school does not secure the appropriate rating, by offering them a Right to Learn Program Scholarship or a BOOST (Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today) Program scholarship.

The Right to Learn Program will provide a scholarship for qualified education expenses, thus enabling the student to learn and achieve in a manner that is more suitable.

The BOOST Program has been in effect since 2016 and has enabled many thousands of low-income Maryland students to choose a nonpublic school that they deem suitable and receive a scholarship towards the tuition costs. Since its 2016 inception, the program has been an annual budget item. Via HB 737 BOOST will become part of Maryland code and be annually funded at \$10 million.

By passing this bill we will be ensuring that all of Maryland's children have the options and opportunities to attain success by developing to their potential.

**Please report FAVORABLY on House Bill 737. Thank you for your support.**