

Lori E Scott
5312 Aerie Ct
Clarksville, MD 21029
Loriscottrn1@yahoo.com

House Bill 226 Public Schools – Self–Contained Special Education Classroom – Use of Video Recording Devices

Position: Support

Ways and Means Hearing 2/3/22

I am the mother of a nonverbal child with significant cognitive delays who receives the majority of her education in a self contained classroom in our local high school. I am in support of this bill to allow cameras in self contained classrooms in MD to give a voice to the students who can not come home and discuss events from their day, as well as teachers who may be accused of harming kids behind these closed doors. The camera footage can give real time information to administrators and Central Office staff when a complaint or allegation is voiced.

This bill ensures that video footage will not be allowed to change a student’s placement because of behavior or educational needs as well as protect teachers and staff from superiors viewing their pedagogy of instruction. This unmonitored video, by law, will only be used to investigate allegations of harm, abuse or neglect to students and vindicate or convict staff of crimes of abuse or harm to nonverbal students.

We have recently seen horrific incidents in Frederick county and other counties in MD where special need students have been harmed over and over again in these classrooms with no accountability from the district and in some instances allowing abusers to move from one school to another without termination.

Many organizations such as MSEA, HCAS, the Arc MD, disability advocates and civil rights attorneys have weighed in on the 2022 language and we believe this bill will protect vulnerable students and staff who work in these classrooms from false allegations, suspensions and terminations.

Cameras have been placed in many areas of our school buildings and funding has been included for surveillance in the Safe to learn Act 2018. Cameras are in cafeterias, hallways, stairwells, front office, vestibules, exteriors and in the gymnasiums. We know cameras are used in these places as a deterrent to harm or theft and are a powerful tool when an investigation ensues.

Please support HB226 to allow cameras in self contained classrooms in MD to ensure protections for our most vulnerable students and staff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lori E Scott

