

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1349
Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus**

House Ways & Means Committee

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1:00 PM

Inez Franklin

Educational Support Professionals of Baltimore County

Greetings Chair Atterbeary and Honorable Members of the Ways & Means Committee. My name is Inez Franklin, and I am an education support professional (ESP) in the Baltimore County Public Schools system. Today, I am providing testimony in support of HB 1349, a bill that will provide a bonus to ESPs and work to find a long-term solution to low wages and issues of retention.

I am a paraeducator at Winfield Elementary School, in Baltimore County. As a board member of Education Support Professionals of Baltimore County (ESPBC), I am compelled to do what is in the best interest of students and the employees I represent within the ESPBC bargaining unit. Education support professionals provide and perform critical functions in our schools every day. However, many ESPs still do not make a living wage. I am deeply concerned about how high inflation and low salaries impact ESPBC members. Many members are working secondary jobs just to make ends meet. To attract and retain highly qualified Education Support Professionals throughout the State of Maryland, we need to work to find a solution to increase wages.

I am hopeful that if HB 1349 is passed, it will help to provide insight and solutions that can help to retain and grow our profession.

I kindly urge the committee for a favorable vote on HB 1349.