

CRAIG J. ZUCKER
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 122
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3625 • 301-858-3625
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625
Fax 410-841-3618 • 301-858-3618
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill – 735 Workgroup to Study the Wages of Education Support Professionals
Budget & Taxation Committee
March 8, 2023
1:00PM
Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill – 735 Workgroup to Study the Wages of Education Support Professionals.**

Education Support Professional (ESP) are essential to the school day and are the backbone of a safe, healthy, and supportive learning and working environment that must exist for educators and students to succeed. Last year, the Senate voted unanimously to for the Maryland State Department of Education to form a workgroup to study wages of ESPs and to provide ESPs with a \$500 bonus. Ultimately, the bill was amended in the House of Delegates to remove the workgroup from the bill but kept the bonuses for ESPs.

The Maryland State Department of Education collected data on how many ESPs there are in the state and reported nearly 45,000 ESPs were eligible to receive a bonus, which came out to an average of \$179. Senate Bill 735 directs MSDE to create the study to investigate what percentage of ESPs in the state earn a living wage, study ways to increase wages to attract and retain these skilled workers – and report their findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

It is imperative to study how many vacant ESP positions there are, their wages, and how we can support this group that was excluded from the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. There is no fiscal note for this Senate Bill 735, and it will match the intent of the legislation passed by the Senate last year.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 735. Thank you for your kind consideration.