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Written Testimony
Senate Bill 419 - Nonpublic Schools - School Health Services Program -
Eligibility for Participation
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – February 24, 2023

Support

Background: SB419 would alter the requirements of the school health services program to allow participation by certain nonpublic schools; prohibit a county board of education from expending more than \$40 per student, adjusted for inflation, to provide school health services to students in certain nonpublic schools; prohibit a county board from providing adequate school health services in nonpublic schools that discriminate in certain ways; and require the Governor to provide \$4,000,000 in the annual budget bill starting in fiscal year 2025 for the program.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies, and it supports excellence in education. Area Jewish Day schools educate more than 8,000 students a year. For much of the Jewish community, a Jewish Day School education is not a choice, it is a necessity.

Our schools strive to keep tuition as low as possible, but still must charge enough to cover their operating costs. Most of these Jewish Day Schools serve a student population that is 20-40% FARMS eligible. Adequate school health services are important for the safety and well-being of students, however, the high costs for school nurses and other medical professionals are often a barrier. SB419 would help many low-tuition nonpublic schools and their students by allowing the State to cover a portion of the cost of health services in the schools. This will in turn help keep our students safer and healthier.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB419.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.