



A Union of Professionals
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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
HB 81 – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION –
LIVE NEAR WHERE YOU TEACH PROGRAM – ESTABLISHMENT
JANUARY 26, 2023**

SUPPORT

Chair Barve and members of the Committee. On behalf of the more than 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), including the Baltimore Teachers' Union (BTU), we ask for a favorable report House Bill 81 to establish a "Live Near Where You Teach" homebuyer assistance program for Maryland teachers, administrators and support staff who work full time at an elementary or secondary school in Maryland.

This program would assist educators and school staff with low interest mortgage loans, down payment and closing assistance for the purchase of homes near where an educator is employed. The program would coordinate with similar programs offered by private entities, county and municipal governments to maximize the total amount that educators may receive. To qualify for the program, school staff must have been employed in a public school for at least 18 months.

Home ownership will give school employees a vested interest in the community, especially their local schools. This will make them more than a workplace but vital to an employee's economic investment.

Maryland, like most states in the country, faces a teacher shortage. This legislation would help with recruitment and retention by offering additional incentives for people to become educators and stay in the profession.

For these reasons, AFT-MD urges a favorable report on House Bill 81. Thank you.

