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Workgroup to Study the Wages of Education Support Professionals

SB 735

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

House Ways and Means Committee

March 29, 2023

1:00pm

**The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 735**, establishing a Workgroup to Study the Wages of Education Support Professionals to determine what percentage of education support professionals in the State earn a living wage and to study increasing the wages of education support professionals to attract and retain skilled workers; and requiring the Workgroup to submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly on or before November 30, 2023, and a final report on or before August 31, 2024.

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,595 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

The Baltimore Teachers Union wants to thank the members of this committee for their work to advance this bill. Educational Support Professionals or ESPs are a vital part of our education system, providing essential support to teachers and students. They work in a variety of roles, such as instructional aides, special education assistants, language interpreters, school secretaries and many other essential roles. Despite their crucial role in the education system, ESPs are often paid low wages.

It is crucial to study the wages of ESPs because they play a critical role in supporting the education of our children. ESPs work directly with students, providing one-on-one support and facilitating small group learning. They assist teachers in creating lesson plans, grading assignments, and managing classroom behavior. Without the support of ESPs, our education system would not be able to function effectively. Despite their importance, ESPs are often paid low wages.

We are grateful that this committee is working to establish a study of the wages of ESPs as it would provide important insights into the challenges they face and help identify ways to improve their working conditions. By raising wages and providing benefits, we can attract and retain high-quality Educational Support Professionals who are committed to supporting the education of our children.

In conclusion, the Baltimore Teachers Union urges a favorable vote on SB 735 to study the wages of educational support professionals. Thank you for your consideration and your work on behalf of our hardworking ESPs.



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