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Ways and Means Committee

HOUSE BILL 448

Nonpublic Education - Special Education Placements -
Renaming and Teacher Salaries
(Teacher Pay Parity Act)

February 15, 2023

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We support HB 448 as it would create teacher pay parity between our public and nonpublic schools. Our nonpublic special education schools are vital ensuring that students have access to a free and appropriate public education as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

While The Arc would like to see all students educated in their neighborhood schools, some students need additional assistance and an environment that is more conducive to ensuring their school success. Non-public schools provide that opportunity to some students and their families, often with smaller classes and teachers specially trained and equipped to meet the unique needs of their students.

The ongoing and deepening educator shortage is severely impacting all schools, but our non-public schools are particularly hard hit. The disparity in teacher pay must be addressed for us to continue to meet the high expectations of IDEA. A few years ago, MSDE conducted a salary parity study. The results of study showed average teacher salaries in public schools and nonpublic special education schools differed significantly by between 23.3% and 40.7%. With a pay gap as wide as this, non-public teacher vacancies have increased, and there is a concerning lack of continuity for students who need consistency the most.

We urge the committee's support of HB 448.

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