

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House
Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023 (HB1219)
Way and Means - For the Hearing on
March 1, 2023
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***House Bill 1219 aligns with the Free State PTA's principle for legislative action that all children have a right to an excellent equitable education. Our legislative agenda also supports legislation that expands the Maryland teacher career and technical educational program coupled with tuition assistance.***

Free State PTA especially supports that House Bill 1219 requires the State Department of Education to establish specific goals for the recruitment and retention of teachers in teacher preparation programs in the State and requires a Maryland Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Diversity Dashboard. We also strongly support the establishment of the Grow Our Own Educators Scholarship Program to provide scholarships to individuals who pledge to fulfill a certain service obligation as a full-time teacher in the State, and the establishment of the Educator Internship Stipend Program to provide stipends to student teachers in internship working directly with students. We also support the expansion of the Teaching Fellows for Maryland scholarship, targeting high needs schools and content areas.

Free State PTA members have communicated that their children have had gaps in their education due to the teacher shortage. For instance, there have been reports of unqualified substitutes teaching higher level math and science, English as a second language and special education courses. We have had reports of parents recruiting their own qualified long term subs. Schools with concentrated poverty have more gaps in credentialed teachers¹, and this was the case even before the pandemic. We also support the Grow your Own movement, in order to give Maryland public school students more opportunities for their career paths after they graduate from high school. The scholarships and stipends will make more career paths achievable for students that cannot afford the high cost of college tuition. It is imperative that Maryland students have access to qualified teachers. **Therefore, Free State PTA urges a favorable vote in support of House Bill 1219.**

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¹<https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/>