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STATE HOUSE  
100 STATE CIRCLE  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND  
21401-1925

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The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and honorable members of the Ways and Means Committee and the jointly assisted Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1219, the Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023.

For the record, I am Eric Luedtke, Chief Legislative Officer to Governor Wes Moore.

House Bill 1219, The Maryland Educator Shortage Act, addresses the significant shortages in education personnel that school districts across Maryland have been experiencing. It is a long bill with many parts, but it is easiest to think of House Bill 1219 as addressing this challenge in seven ways.

The first is expanding access to the Teaching Fellows for Maryland Program. This scholarship program assists in making tuition affordable for college students working towards a degree to become a teacher. Currently, this program is underutilized, but with reform, this program has the potential to encourage more young individuals to enter the educational profession.

Second, establishing a new program that provides stipends to student teachers participating in the teacher internship, which they must complete to earn their certification. Currently, teacher internships are unpaid and cause a severe burden to lower-income students who are often already managing a full course load and a full or part-time job to pay their way through school.

Third, establishing a new grant program to support local school systems, higher education institutions, and alternative teacher preparation programs to train non-certificated educators in certificated careers. In creating Grow Your Own programs, we can assist current non-certified educational personnel to earn their certification. In addition to helping grow teacher training ranks in Maryland, access to a program as such would be an incentive for Marylanders to sign up as paraeducators or in other educational support roles.

Next, House Bill 1219 will require higher education institutions to establish specific goals for recruiting and retaining student teachers.

In addition to requiring higher education institutions to establish specific goals, House Bill 1219 requires the Maryland State Department of Education to create an educator recruitment,

retention, and diversity dashboard to provide the general public with information about educator shortages and their impact on schools across Maryland.

Lastly, the Maryland Educator Shortage Act aims to clarify the qualifications of the early childhood educators to be considered highly qualified and acceding Maryland to the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact.

We have an opportunity with this bill to continue to support Maryland Educators and address the current educator shortage by incentivizing individuals to pursue a career in teaching, making education more accessible, and helping current and future teachers in order to ensure they succeed. We have already identified some sections in the bill as introduced and are committed to working on amendments with the Committee and stakeholders. I look forward to working with each of you to help strengthen our educator training pipeline.

I urge a favorable report on House Bill 1219.