

Testimony SUPPORT of House Bill 142  
More Local Tax Relief for Working Families Act of 2023

House Ways and Means Committee  
February 2, 2023

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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 142, which gives counties greater authority raise revenue in a fair manner to fund priorities like education. The bill allows counties to increase the top rate to 3.7% from 3.2%. The bill could help local governments create a fairer tax structure and raise needed revenue to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future with fidelity.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

HB 142 gives counties additional flexibility to set taxing policy that works for their communities. This enabling legislation gives local leaders another tool when crafting local tax policy and could help raise additional funds for priorities like public education. MSEA supports passage of an adequate, sustainable, predictable revenue stream that will adequately fund both the operating and construction costs of our public schools. A great public school for every child means our students have updated technology, small manageable classes, safe and modern schools, proper healthcare and nutrition, and have highly qualified and highly effective educators.

Implementing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future with fidelity and making up for the educational, and social-emotional and behavioral health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will take considerable resources. As recently described in the Department of Legislative Services' Fiscal Briefing to this committee, the state of Maryland is now better identifying students in poverty. This has led to 34.2% increase or 110,501 students from last year that have been identified as eligible for free or reduced priced meals. This will have a financial impact on the state, as Maryland understands that these students need more resources.

MSEA urges a Favorable Report on House Bill 142.