



*Maryland's Voice for
Nonpublic Education*

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HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

HOUSE BILL 603

NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS - SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM – ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of roughly 120,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

A facility or institution that bears responsibility for children on its property day-in and day-out, is compelled to have a medical presence ready and able to respond when a student experiences any type of ailment or injury. Nonpublic schools who sustain themselves via tuition and fund-raising struggle mightily to cover their education budgets, let alone their medical budget. Assisting a nonpublic school in covering their nursing costs is indeed a worthy investment for the State of Maryland, as all children are worthy of access to medical attention while in school regardless of where they are educated.

House Bill 603, as amended, will provide eligible nonpublic schools with a \$40 per pupil reimbursement for the health services costs it incurs. Eligibility for this program will follow the guidelines of the Aid to Nonpublic School Program (i.e. the nonpublic school textbook program) which ensures that it is only going to those schools who cater to a low-income population.

Currently there is a great need for school nurses across nonpublic schools in Maryland. Only a fraction of Maryland's nonpublic schools are able afford a part-time nurse, let alone one who is on premises for the full school day.

Efforts to pass a bill similar to this have been pursued in recent legislative sessions, and funding has been pursued in the state budget, yet this critical need has yet to have been met.

Although we have thankfully emerged to the largest extent from the COVID-era, there is still great and justified need for an adequate medical service program to allow for all schools to have an active nurse present during the school day. This reimbursement model provides the opportunity for all schools to help maintain the health and safety of our children.

Thank you for your support of HB 603 and we urge a favorable report.