



March 8, 2023

Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 1237: Special Education – Judicial Actions – Attorney’s Fees and Related Costs.

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates, Ways and Means and Judiciary Committees.

I am the parent of a child with multiple challenges and disabilities. He has been bounced between 504 plans and IEP plans over the course of 8 years within the AACPS system. After we initiated our rights to request that the county school system pay for an IEE, or outside professional assessment. We had a due process complaint filed on our family by AACPS when we did not agree with their expert’s assessment reports of my son’s intellectual and behavioral challenges, and his disabilities. We felt taking services away from our son was doing more harm than good so we challenged the school’s findings.

Caring for a child with disabilities is already an expensive undertaking for any family. There are lots of associated costs for therapies, specialists, doctors, medications and the list goes on and on. Many families that are in the public school system may encounter resistance to provide much needed services from their local school system officials. But lack the means to fight a school system with expensive legal fees and delays in received services that have been guaranteed to our children by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA.

Many families of children with disabilities soon find themselves embroiled in a due process hearing and ensuing legal battle with their local school district. An expensive and time-consuming process that is very emotionally and financially draining. One that we will probably lose as the deck has been stacked against us from the beginning here in Maryland at the offices of OAH. All this just to get the services that a child needs to access their education in a fair and equitable manner, and in alignment with their non-disabled peers. It’s the law of the land, yet it is always an uphill fight in many Maryland school districts.

We ask for so many of our families, like mine, that you support HB 1237. After going through an expensive due process hearing and potential legal court battle with a school system, special education families need this financial relief and to recover the legal fees that weigh heavy on many Maryland families. We simply need to do better for our most vulnerable students and their families. Please ease their burden and return a favorable report for HB 1237.

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Parent Advocacy Consortium: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>