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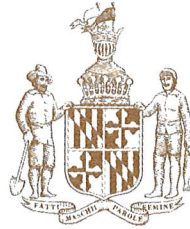
Chair, Finance Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committee on Gaming Oversight

Joint Committee on Management  
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Spending Affordability Committee



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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

February 14, 2024

**Senate Bill 441**

**Janet Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program**  
**Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award – Public School Nurse**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee;

I am pleased to present Senate Bill 441 – Janet Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award – Public School Nurse. SB 441 addresses what we believe to be an oversight in the Janet Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program. This program was established by the Maryland General Assembly to address professional shortages in state and local governments, as well as the non-profit section.

School nurses are responsible for the health of every student, yet we do not even have enough nurses to have one nurse in every school. There is on average about 0.75 nurses per school on a statewide basis, according to the most recently available data from the Maryland State Department of Education (2018-2019). This number translates to an average of 1 nurse per 848 students. In Frederick, Montgomery, and Washington Counties, as well as Baltimore City, the numbers are dramatically worse with one nurse per close to 1,500 students.

We need to correct the oversight in the Janet Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program for school nurses. The program already recognizes other health professions that work in schools including speech language pathologists and occupational therapists. Last year, the Maryland General Assembly, thanks to the work of this Committee, clarified that program must also be available to mental health professionals in school. School nurses are the only health professional who are now excluded from the program.

The school nursing shortage will not be addressed overnight, and it will take more than this legislation. However, we know that loan repayment programs provide a strategy that works. It simply does not make sense that school nurses are the only school health professional excluded from the Janet Hoffman Loan Repayment Program, nor that nurses in other governmental settings are eligible, just not school nurses.

Finally, we all know that we are in the midst of an extended crisis with the nursing shortage. Our school systems are struggling more than ever to compete with the private sector for nurses.

In 2022, I sponsored legislation, which was cross-filed with then Delegate Ariana Kelly, to create the Maryland's Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis. The Commission submitted its final report in January. In the report, there was frequent mention of loan repayment programs as an important strategy as we move forward in addressing the crisis in nursing.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this legislation to the Committee. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 441.

Employer (2022)	School Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses	Certified Nursing Assistant	Other Health Services	Enrollment (2018-19)	Schools Count	Students Per Nurse	Nurses Per School
Allegany	22	1	0	6	8539	26	388	0.85
Anne Arundel	77	21	135.5	7	83300	124	1082	0.62
Baltimore	173	0	40	0	113814	174	658	0.99
Baltimore City	50	3	127	1	79297	167	1585.94	0.30
Calvert	18	7	0	2	15936	25	885.33	0.72
Caroline	8	2	7	0	5829	10	728.63	0.80
Carroll	48	3	0	3	25179	44	524.56	1.09
Cecil	29	0	0	0	15307	29	527.83	1.00
Charles	35	9	0	0	27108	38	774.51	0.92
Dorchester	12	4	1*	1*	4785	13	398.75	0.92
Frederick	26	8	56	0	42713	68	1642.81	0.38
Garrett	0	11	0	0	3842	12	NA	NA
Harford	61	5	0	0	37826	54	620.10	1.13
Howard	59	0	62	0	57907	77	981.47	0.77
Kent	2	0	4	1	1912	5	956.00	0.40
Montgomery	118	0	212	59	162680	208	1378.64	0.57
Prince George's	198	21	0	2	132667	208	670.04	0.95
Queen Anne's	14	2	0	0	7749	14	553.50	1.00
SEED School	1	1	0	1	404	1	404.00	1.00
Somerset	6	4	1	1	2930	9	488.33	0.67
St. Mary's	33	3	0	0	17999	30	545.42	1.10
Talbot	6	0	6	1	4674	8	779.00	0.75
Washington Local Hospital	16	10	26	1	22681	45	1417.56	0.36
Wicomico	28	0	9	2	14949	25	533.89	1.12
Worcester	17	0	0	0	6810	14	400.59	1.21
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>685.5</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>896837</b>	<b>1428</b>	<b>848.47</b>	<b>0.74</b>

Notes \* 1 person certified as CNA and CMT

Data Source and Years: Nursing data from 2018-2019 MSDE Survey; Enrollment and school count data from 2018-2019 MdReportCard Enrollment Data; the local employer is current year (2022)