



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

KATE STEWART
VICE PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

HB 66 - Property Tax Credits - Public School Employees, Health and Safety Improvements, and Property Used for Local Housing Programs

Testimony of Kate Stewart, Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

Position: SUPPORT

February 1, 2024

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4 and as the Vice President of the Montgomery County Council. Today, I am speaking on behalf of myself in support of **Property Tax Credits - Public School Employees, Health and Safety Improvements, and Property Used for Local Housing Programs (House Bill 66)**. This legislation would enable local governments to grant a property tax credit for public school employees or for apartment or condominium buildings with health or safety improvements made on or after July 1, 2024.

This legislation would allow Counties to help move forward the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, an important piece of policy for our education system. According to the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), there is a clear educator shortage and the 2022-23 school year began with over 2,500 educator vacancies. One third of educators leave within the first five years. A main reason for leaving the profession is compensation. The Blueprint targets these issues by setting a goal of hiring 15,000 new educators and implementing career ladders to address compensation issues. Property tax credits to educators is an additional tool to be used to make counties in Maryland, like Montgomery County, more appealing and affordable for teachers.

Addressing health and safety concerns in buildings is another important aspect of this bill. In Montgomery County, for example, there are numerous older apartments and condominiums that are due for large maintenance/renovation projects. This bill would aid these buildings to address important safety issues like asbestos and foundational concerns in a timely manner and will help preserve our needed affordable housing across the state of Maryland.

I urge you to support this bill to bring more educators to Maryland and invest in our existing housing units.