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Written Testimony in Favor of House Bill 1418

As a mother of a high school student in Baltimore City Public Schools and the chapter leader of Baltimore City Start School Later, I am deeply invested in advocating for positive changes in school start times.

My son attends Baltimore City College High School, where classes begin at 7:30 a.m. Unfortunately, this early start time poses significant challenges for many students. Despite the dedication of both students and teachers, less than half of the class is consistently present and engaged at such an early hour. For many students, particularly those reliant on public transportation, the logistical hurdles of reaching school on time are considerable. Some face lengthy commutes involving multiple buses, while others struggle to simply get out of bed early enough to prepare for the school day.

Reflecting on my own high school experience, I recall starting the day in homeroom, a structure that allowed for a more gradual transition into the academic routine. However, with the current start time at 7:30 a.m., mornings are often spent coaxing my son out of bed and encouraging him to muster the energy for the day ahead. Even the small adjustment, from the 2021-22 school year 15-minute later start time of 7:45 a.m., significantly impacted the morning rush and negatively impacted the readiness of students to engage in learning.

It's evident that later school start times are not only beneficial but also necessary for the well-being and academic success of students in our community. By advocating for this change, we can create a more supportive and conducive learning environment for all students.