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**HB 53 - Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth
House Appropriations Committee
January 28, 2025**

SUPPORT with AMENDMENTS

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 53 if amended to include representation of professional school personnel. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

HB 53 establishes a Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth to analyze the complex issue of delays in student enrollment counts and student population growth as it relates to school funding. The task force includes members appointed from the General Assembly, state departments, boards of education, and school associations. However, HB 53 does not include representation for *all* professional school personnel and support staff that work directly with students every day. This exclusion limits the task force's ability to fully study the issue, as these professionals offer critical insights into the challenges that students face and provide practical solutions and guidance on how it affects funding and overall educational outcomes. It is essential that their voices be included in these conversations as these decisions not only affect their careers but also the futures of their students.

To fix this issue, we propose the following amendment:

Insert the following text after (b)(3), moving all subsequent text down:

“(4) one representative appointed by the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO representing professional school personnel;”

The Task Force's proposed scope emphasizes addressing the challenges related to student enrollment and its effect on school funding and student population growth while also being tasked to make recommendations on school funding provisions. We strongly believe the quality of the conversation is significantly enhanced when we include the voices of those who directly impact our school systems and students.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to only support HB 53 if it has been amended to address these concerns.

