



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 157

EDUCATION - SAFE SCHOOLS FUND - GRANT ALLOCATIONS

JANUARY 28, 2025

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of over 135,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

House Bill 157 authorizes the reallocation of funds from the Safe Schools Fund to local school systems who have expended their allocations and can demonstrate continued additional need. The safety of schools and students in Maryland is indisputably of paramount importance, and if protecting all Maryland students is a constant concern, it is all the more important in these charged and sometimes-dangerous times. Notably, however, safety concerns affect nonpublic schools certainly no less than they affect public schools.

Two years ago, the state budget removed the \$3.5 million allocation grant for school safety and security measures for lower-tuition nonpublic schools. Threats to school security, however, remain. We therefore respectfully request a renewal of the \$3.5 million appropriation for the Nonpublic School Safety Grant, per the amendment below.

We thank the State of Maryland for its partnerships with our nonpublic schools in securing a safe and secure environment for our children to learn in. Maryland's nonpublic school community requests that this committee please adopt the amendment below, and issue a favorable report on House Bill 157 as amended.

Thank you.

Amendment to House Bill 157

Amendment No. 1

Page 2, line 13, insert:

7-1513. Nonpublic School Safety Improvement Grant Program

- (A) THERE IS A NONPUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM.
- (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE TO ENHANCE SCHOOL SAFETY.
- (C) BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE GOVERNOR SHALL PROVIDE AT LEAST \$3,500,000 TO NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT WERE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE AID TO NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS R00A03.04 (FOR THE PURCHASE OF TEXTBOOKS OR COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE FOR LOANS TO STUDENTS IN ELIGIBLE NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS) DURING THE PRECEDING SCHOOL YEAR OR NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT SERVE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH THE NON-PUBLIC PLACEMENT PROGRAM R00A02.07 SUBPROGRAM
- (D) NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE NONPUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM SHALL RECEIVE A MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF \$65 PER ELIGIBLE NONPUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS, EXCEPT THAT AT SCHOOLS WHERE AT LEAST 20% OF THE STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEAL PROGRAM OR FOR SCHOOLS THAT SERVICE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH THE NON-PUBLIC PLACEMENT PROGRAM, THERE SHALL BE A DISTRIBUTION OF \$85 PER STUDENT, AND NO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL MAY RECEIVE LESS THAN \$5,000.