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**House Bill 1369 – Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**March 5, 2025**  
**FAVORABLE**

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents over 9,000 employees of Baltimore City Public Schools, including teachers, paraprofessionals, school secretaries, counselors, librarians, clinicians, transportation aides, and school support staff. Our members are on the frontlines of public education everyday, and strive to educate, support and develop Baltimore City's young people. Baltimore's educators encounter some of the most challenging work environments in the state, and we see the impact of Baltimore's social and economic challenges every day. Our educators work tirelessly to break cycles of poverty, and we need more resources and a strong network of public services to help our students and their families thrive. The Baltimore Teachers Union is writing in strong support of HB 1369 and we request that the committee issue a favorable report.

Education Support Professionals—our paraprofessionals, school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and other essential staff—are the backbone of our public schools. They ensure that our classrooms run smoothly, that students are safe and supported, and that our schools remain places where learning can thrive. Yet, despite their critical contributions, many ESPs in Maryland earn wages that fail to keep up with the rising cost of living, forcing them to work multiple jobs just to make ends meet.

Raising the minimum wage for ESPs to \$25 an hour is a necessary step toward ensuring economic dignity for those who make our schools function. It is also an investment in school stability, student success, and workforce retention.

**Why This Bill is Essential:**

- Many school districts across Maryland face severe shortages of ESPs, with positions left unfilled due to low wages and demanding working conditions. A livable wage will help attract and retain dedicated professionals.
- ESPs play a vital role in classroom instruction, behavioral support, and school operations. When ESP positions remain vacant or suffer from high turnover, students lose out on the consistency and support they need.
- Many ESPs are women and people of color who have historically been underpaid for their labor. Raising wages to \$25/hour is a step toward pay equity and justice.
- Inflation and rising costs in Maryland have made it nearly impossible to survive on the current wages many ESPs earn. No one working full-time in our public schools should struggle to pay for rent, food, or healthcare.

Passing HB 1369 is not just about wages—it is about respect, dignity, and the recognition that every worker in our schools deserves fair compensation for their labor. We urge the committee to give this bill a favorable report and take a stand for the education professionals who keep Maryland's schools running every day.

**The Baltimore Teachers Union urges the committee to issue a favorable report of House Bill 1369.**