



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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## **HB 1369 - Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals House Appropriations Committee March 5, 2025**

### **SUPPORT**

**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 1369. 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 1369 establishes a minimum wage of \$25 per hour for Education Support Professionals (ESPs) and requires annual adjustments for inflation. As our state continues to grapple with growing staff shortages, it is important that we ensure these individuals have the resources they need and the compensation they deserve.

ESPs play an essential role in the everyday operations of our schools and in students' lives both inside and outside the classroom. Personnel such as paraeducators, custodians, cafeteria workers, administrative staff, bus drivers, and security and technology staff, keep our schools running smoothly and efficiently all while keeping students safe and healthy.

Currently, the state minimum wage is \$15 per hour without adjustments for inflation and no minimum wage rate for ESPs. This fails to keep pace with the rising cost of living, leaving them struggling to provide for their families. HB 1369 addresses this disparity by recognizing the invaluable work of these dedicated professionals and ensuring they receive fair compensation for their work.

This legislation furthers our state's commitment to investing in our schools, students and communities.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on HB 1369.