

**Written Testimony for the Maryland House Appropriations Committee  
HB 1369 - Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals  
March 5, 2025**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee: AFT Maryland asks for a favorable report on HB 1369, which establishes a minimum wage of \$25.00 per hour for education support professionals (ESP) and ensures annual adjustments tied to inflation.

Education support professionals are the backbone of our public schools. They serve as paraprofessionals, custodians, cafeteria workers, administrative staff, and other essential personnel who create a safe, clean, and supportive learning environment for Maryland's students.

Despite their indispensable contributions, many ESPs currently earn wages that fail to keep pace with the rising cost of living, leaving them struggling to provide for their families. SB 892 directly addresses this inequity by ensuring these dedicated professionals receive fair compensation for their invaluable work.

AFT Maryland supports the provision of the bill that indexes wage increases to inflation. It helps to ensure that ESP wages will not erode over time due to rising costs of living. As the cost of housing, transportation, and basic necessities continues to increase, it is imperative that ESP wages remain competitive and reflective of economic realities.

Fair compensation for ESPs is an investment in the success of Maryland's students and the stability of our communities. Research shows that fair wages lead to higher job satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and improved student outcomes.

HB 1369 is a critical step toward achieving economic justice for Maryland's education support professionals. It recognizes their essential contributions, provides fair wages, and helps to ensure financial stability through cost-of-living adjustments. AFT Maryland urges a favorable report.

