

CRAIG J. ZUCKER
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 120
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3625
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill 892- Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
March 4th, 2025
1:00pm
Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the Budget and Taxation Committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 892- Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals.**

Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) are the foundation of our public school system. From administrative staff and custodians to bus drivers and paraeducators, these professionals create environments where teaching and learning can flourish. Their expertise ensures schools operate smoothly while supporting education at every level.

The General Assembly has previously recognized the critical role of ESPs. The FY23 budget appropriated \$8 million for local education agencies to issue bonuses to their education support professionals in FY2023. Additionally, the FY2024 budget also included \$1,000 bonuses for education support professionals. While these steps were important acknowledgments of the value of ESPs, more substantial action is needed. A recent Maryland State Department of Education survey revealed that nearly 80% of ESPs need a second job to make ends meet, and roughly 55% reported having a second job.

Senate Bill 892 would raise the minimum wage for educational support professionals to \$25.00 per hour. Beginning on July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the minimum wage for ESPs will be adjusted to reflect inflation, ensuring wages keep pace with the rising cost of living. The increase is to be calculated by multiplying the current minimum wage for ESPs by the inflation rate of the previous fiscal year.

By passing Senate Bill 892, Maryland not only acknowledges the contributions of ESPs but takes a meaningful step toward ensuring fair wages for those who support our students every day. I respectfully request a **favorable report on Senate Bill 892**. Thank you for your consideration.