

AFSCME Council 3 Senate Bill 892 Testimony_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Christian Gobel

Position: FAV



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Patrick Moran – President

**SB892 – Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
Budget & Taxation Committee
March 4, 2025**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 support Senate Bill 892. Senate Bill 892 seeks to attract more individuals into careers supporting our public schools and students by establishing a minimum \$25 per hour minimum wage for education support professionals (ESPs). The legislation would annually adjust the minimum wage for inflation.

AFSCME Council 3 represents approximately 50,000 public service workers at the state, county, and municipal levels of government. Our union is proud to represent dedicated ESPs in Allegany County Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools, Carroll County Public Schools, Charles County Public Schools, Harford County Public Schools, and Howard County Public Schools. ESPs are essential for the success of our public schools and students. Approximately 45,000 ESPs work across Maryland in a variety of crucial roles including food service, transportation, custodial services, transportation, individualized educational support, health services, school safety, building and grounds maintenance, and more. In short, without the labor of our dedicated school support staff, our schools could not function.

However, for far too long, ESPs have not received fair wages that support themselves and their families. In December 2024, the Maryland State Department of Education published a report on noncertificated education support professionals that included information and responses on pay data and their economic security.¹ The report found that the median salary for ESPs is approximately \$42,000 per year, however, this figure was skewed by the salary of technical personnel, which caused the median to be higher.² The median salary for paraprofessionals was approximately \$34,000,³ and the report found that approximately 62% of ESPs make less than \$46,000, when technical personnel were excluded.⁴ A significant majority of ESPs (57.21%) have considered leaving their roles due to their current pay and benefits.⁵ Similarly, a majority of ESPs reported they cannot support themselves or their families on their current pay, could not handle a major unexpected expense, while at the same time are reporting increases in their workload due to existing vacancies or reductions in force.⁶ At the same time, the cost of living including housing, food, and utilities have risen dramatically further straining families budgets and their ability to stay afloat.

¹ Maryland State Department of Education, *Noncertificated Education Support Professionals*, (December 2024), https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2024/2024_182.pdf.

² *Id.* at 6.

³ *Id.* at 7.

⁴ *Id.* at 9.

⁵ *Id.* at 12.

⁶ *Id.* at 12, 14.

In recent years, the General Assembly recognized that teacher salaries had remained too low, were non-competitive, and needed to be raised in order to attract more individuals into the teaching profession. As part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the General Assembly established a minimum starting pay rate for teachers of \$60,000 to be achieved by July 1, 2026,⁷ and established corresponding salary increases for progression along career ladders.⁸

Similarly, starting pay must be increased to attract more individuals into ESP careers. Without a growing pipeline of dedicated ESPs, our public schools and our students will continue to deal with staffing vacancies that impact our public school services. Moreover, our public employers should act as model employers and provide a level of pay and benefits that afford dignity to the dedicated public employees that make public services possible for all Marylanders. We urge the General Assembly to take action to afford economic dignity to dedicated ESPs and help build tomorrow's pipeline.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 892.

⁷ MD Code, Education, § 6-1009(e).

⁸ MD Code, Education, § 6-1009(a).

SEIU Local 500 Testimony on SB 892 - 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



Testimony - SB 892, Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
Favorable

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

March 4, 2025

Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chair Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents over 23,000 workers across Maryland including over 10,000 educational support professionals in our Montgomery County Public Schools. We wish to express our strong support for Senate Bill 892, which seeks to establish a minimum wage of \$25 per hour for education support professionals (ESPs) across Maryland. As the backbone of our public school system, ESPs—including paraeducators, custodians, administrative staff, bus drivers, and food service workers—play an essential role in ensuring that students receive a high-quality education in a safe, clean, and well-functioning environment.

Currently, many of these dedicated professionals struggle to make ends meet due to low wages that fail to reflect the vital contributions they make to our schools. By setting a minimum wage of \$25 per hour, this bill acknowledges the invaluable role of ESPs and ensures they receive fair compensation for their hard work. Furthermore, the provision tying future wage increases to inflation guarantees that their earnings keep pace with the rising cost of living.

Investing in our education workforce is an investment in our students. Providing fair wages will help attract and retain skilled professionals, reduce turnover, and create more stability within our schools—ultimately benefiting Maryland’s children. No education system can thrive without the support of the individuals who keep our schools running smoothly every day.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 892 and take this critical step toward recognizing and supporting the hardworking professionals who make Maryland's schools successful.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs
SEIU Local 500

SB 892 - Minimum Wage for Education Support Profes

Uploaded by: Denise Riley

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony for the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 892 - Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
March 4, 2025**

SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee: AFT Maryland asks for a favorable report on SB 892, 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.

SB 892 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.

SB 892 - Education - Minimum Wage for Education Su

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

**SB 892 - Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 4, 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 SB 892. 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.

SB 892 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. SB 892 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 SB 892.

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Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: FAV

**Education Advocacy Coalition
for Students with Disabilities**

BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 892

Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals

March 4, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities, supports Senate Bill 892, which would establish a minimum wage for education support professionals.

EAC members collectively have vast experience representing or supporting students with disabilities and their families throughout the state and recognize that education support professionals play an essential role in supporting students, especially students with disabilities. Education support professionals can fulfill a range of roles in schools, from providing students with one-to-one assistance and assisting with feeding, toileting, mobility, and other activities essential to student safety and participation throughout the school day to reducing staff/student ratios, providing redirection, and reinforcing behavior intervention plans. For students whose individualized education programs (IEPs) require the assistance of a “dedicated aide” “1:1 support” or other direct assistance from an education support professional, retention and hiring barriers can result in disciplinary action, stalled progress, or even regression for students with disabilities if they do not receive the personal, behavior or instructional support they need to be successful in school.

Some districts have created pathways for education support personnel to become teachers, recognizing the value that support professionals bring to the classroom and the benefit they provide to students who need individual support to access and benefit from their education. Particularly given staff turnover and personnel shortages in schools, it is important that education support professionals be compensated at a minimum pay rate that recognizes the important role they have in ensuring that children have access to and can make meaningful progress in school. For these reasons, the EAC supports Senate Bill 892.

Contact: Leslie Seid Margolis at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 443-692-2505.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene A. Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC
Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents’ Place of Maryland
Linda Barton, MSED, Education Consultant

Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony: Senate Bill 892

March 4, 2025

Page Two

Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland, Co-Chairperson, Education Advocacy Coalition

Ellen A. Callegary, Attorney (Retired)

Melanie Carlos, xMinds (Partnership for Extraordinary Minds)

Stephanie Carr, S.L. Carr Education Consultants, LLC

Rich Ceruolo, Parent

Michelle R. Davis, M.Ed., ABCs for Life Success

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC

Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate

Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network

Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland, Co-Chairperson, Education Advocacy Coalition

Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy

Beth Nolan, MAT, Education Team Allies

Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism

Jaime E. Seaton, BGS Law, LLC

Karleen Spitulnik, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Ronnetta Stanley, M.Ed., Loud Voices Together

Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group

Maureen van Stone, Kendall Eaton, Genevieve Hornik, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger
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MSEA SB 892 FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Zwerling

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 892
Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
March 4, 2025

Samantha Zwerling
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 892, which would establish a minimum starting wage for Education Support Professionals who work in our public schools.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents over 40 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The critical shortage of educators includes support staff in nearly every job category. These employees get students to school, clean and maintain our school buildings, support classroom instruction, prepare and serve healthy meals, provide clerical support, and more. To retain current employees and recruit new ones, we must raise wages for these public servants.

For the past three years, MSEA's advocacy for education support professionals (ESP) has been driven by the ESP Bill of Rights, a 10-point platform staking a claim for the living wage, contracts, on-the-job safety, fairness, and respect support staff deserve. Senate Bill 892 is one of the bills that supports the ESP Bill of Rights.

Last year, through the Joint Chairman's Report, the General Assembly required the Maryland State Department of Education to survey support staff about pay equity and personal finances. The results tell a story: education support staff need and deserve a bigger paycheck.

- 62% of ESPs make \$42,270 or less (not including IT staff). According to the MIT wage calculator, a living wage in Maryland is \$51,460.
 - *Note: Inflation has increased 32% during the last 10 years.*
- Nearly 80% of ESPs say they need a second job to make ends meet

- More than 50% have at least two jobs
- Nearly 60% are considering leaving their jobs for better pay and benefits

MSDE Survey of Education Support Staff	Response	Percent of Respondents (N=12,104)
I am satisfied with my base pay rate and benefits	Strongly Disagree	52%
I am just getting by financially	Strongly Agree	35%
I am able to support myself and/or my family on my current pay.	Strongly Disagree	50%
I could handle a major unexpected expense	Strongly Disagree	64%
I have had to incur debts to make ends meet for myself and/or my family.	Strongly Agree	38%
Have you considered leaving your current role due to your current pay and benefits	Yes	57%

Too many ESPs work second jobs and struggle to provide for their families, buy homes, save for their futures, and afford community or four-year college tuition for their children to learn a trade and plan a career. The looming threats of privatization by school districts, which would import even lower-paid workers from outside areas, risk the stability of schools and communities and further undermine the value of ESPs and their jobs. One job should be enough for every ESP. ESPs should not have to work multiple jobs for financial independence.

MSEA urges a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 892.

SB 892- Education - Education Support Professional

Uploaded by: Senator Craig Zucker

Position: FAV

CRAIG J. ZUCKER
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County



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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.

SB0892 Howard Co BOE Testimony 030525 for B&T - ES

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 4, 2025

SB0892: UNFAVORABLE
Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Jolene Mosley, *Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Andrea Chamblee, Esq.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Meg Ricks

Antonia Watts

James Obasiolu
Student Member

William J. Barnes
*Superintendent,
Secretary/Treasurer*

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes the **Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals** given the significant fiscal burdens placed on local school systems.

SB0892 requires local boards of education to pay education support professionals a minimum wage of \$25.00 per hour beginning July 1, 2025. An “education support professional” is defined under the bills as a noncertificated public school employee designated as part of nonsupervisory bargaining unit. Subsequent minimum wage would grow based on the Consumer Price Index or a successor index published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Maryland State Board of Education would adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of the bill.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) currently has over 2,100 full-time employee positions (FTE) that fall under the Education Support Professional (HCEA-ESP) bargaining unit in Howard County. Of those, approximately 923 FTE earn less than \$25.00 per hour.

The chart below highlights the steps and grades on the HCEA-ESP Secretaries and Assistants pay scale that are below \$25.00 per hour. This is the largest cohort impacted by this legislation. SB0892 would not only fundamentally alter the relationship of step/grade/classification for this salary schedule, but also for the classification and compensation relationship to all other salary schedules.

Depending on how the legislation would be implemented, without commensurate dedicated funding it likely would be cost-prohibitive. For illustrative purposes, one way to reach the \$25.00 per hour minimum would be to give a percentage increase to bring the lowest grade/steps up to \$25.00 per hour. That would take about a 40 percent COLA. Maintaining the same step/grade/pay relationship for everyone on this schedule would require everyone on the schedule to get the 40 percent increase. That would increase total cost by \$36.4 million for workers on this salary schedule alone.

Secretaries and Assistants												
Effective July 1, 2024												
GRADE STEP	I	II	III SAs	IV	V	VI Paras	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
1	\$17.88	\$18.10	\$18.31	\$18.54	\$18.75	\$19.40	\$19.62	\$19.84	\$20.48	\$21.14	\$22.00	\$23.09
2	\$18.43	\$18.66	\$18.93	\$19.19	\$19.46	\$20.16	\$20.43	\$20.66	\$21.35	\$22.09	\$22.97	\$24.08
3	\$18.99	\$19.24	\$19.54	\$19.85	\$20.16	\$20.92	\$21.22	\$21.50	\$22.22	\$23.05	\$23.91	\$25.06
4	\$19.53	\$19.81	\$20.16	\$20.49	\$20.88	\$21.68	\$22.01	\$22.36	\$23.09	\$23.99	\$24.88	\$26.05
5	\$20.07	\$20.38	\$20.77	\$21.16	\$21.57	\$22.43	\$22.81	\$23.19	\$23.95	\$24.94	\$25.83	\$27.06
6	\$20.63	\$20.95	\$21.37	\$21.82	\$22.27	\$23.19	\$23.61	\$24.04	\$24.82	\$25.87	\$26.78	\$28.04
7	\$21.18	\$21.52	\$21.99	\$22.46	\$22.99	\$23.97	\$24.40	\$24.88	\$25.67	\$26.83	\$27.74	\$29.04
8	\$21.73	\$22.09	\$22.60	\$23.12	\$23.69	\$24.73	\$25.18	\$25.72	\$26.54	\$27.77	\$28.70	\$30.03
9	\$22.28	\$22.66	\$23.22	\$23.78	\$24.40	\$25.48	\$25.99	\$26.56	\$27.40	\$28.72	\$29.66	\$31.02
10	\$22.83	\$23.23	\$23.82	\$24.44	\$25.10	\$26.24	\$26.79	\$27.40	\$28.28	\$29.66	\$30.60	\$32.01
11	\$23.37	\$23.81	\$24.43	\$25.09	\$25.82	\$26.99	\$27.59	\$28.24	\$29.13	\$30.62	\$31.57	\$33.02
12	\$23.95	\$24.39	\$25.05	\$25.75	\$26.52	\$27.77	\$28.38	\$29.09	\$30.00	\$31.56	\$32.53	\$34.00
13	\$24.49	\$24.95	\$25.66	\$26.40	\$27.23	\$28.54	\$29.18	\$29.93	\$30.87	\$32.51	\$33.48	\$34.99
14	\$25.04	\$25.52	\$26.27	\$27.07	\$27.94	\$29.29	\$29.97	\$30.76	\$31.74	\$33.45	\$34.44	\$35.98
15	\$25.59	\$26.08	\$26.88	\$27.72	\$28.65	\$30.05	\$30.76	\$31.62	\$32.59	\$34.40	\$35.40	\$36.97
16	\$26.15	\$26.67	\$27.50	\$28.37	\$29.34	\$30.82	\$31.56	\$32.45	\$33.47	\$35.36	\$36.36	\$37.97
17	\$26.69	\$27.24	\$28.11	\$29.03	\$30.04	\$31.57	\$32.36	\$33.29	\$34.33	\$36.30	\$37.31	\$38.97
18	\$27.23	\$27.81	\$28.72	\$29.68	\$30.76	\$32.33	\$33.16	\$34.13	\$35.19	\$37.25	\$38.27	\$39.95
19	\$27.79	\$28.37	\$29.32	\$30.35	\$31.46	\$33.10	\$33.95	\$34.98	\$36.06	\$38.19	\$39.22	\$40.95
Over 19	\$28.34	\$28.95	\$29.94	\$31.00	\$32.17	\$33.85	\$34.74	\$35.82	\$36.92	\$39.14	\$40.18	\$41.94

Without dedicated funding, that increase as of July 1, 2025, and any others necessitated should SB0892 pass, would be impossible to do without extensive cuts to the HCPSS budget. For example, the initial proposed reductions to existing services considered by HCPSS for the FY25 Operating Budget to make up a \$46.6 million gap in funding included a class size increase by two at all levels, and cuts to programs like gifted and talented, strings, and summer school.

Additionally, the legislation automatically indexes cost of living increases to the rate of inflation for future years. This removes decision-making from the local level and effectively undercuts the purposes of collective bargaining.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on SB0892 from this Committee.