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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB 845 – LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES – EDUCATOR SCREENING – NASDTEC
CLEARINGHOUSE (SCHOOL PERSONNEL VETTING AND HIRING TRANSPARENCY ACT)

SB 845, the School Personnel Vetting and Hiring Transparency Act, is a commonsense measure to enhance transparency, accountability, and safety in Maryland’s schools by ensuring that all local education agencies (LEAs) utilize the NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse when hiring and vetting educators.

The urgent need for this legislation became painfully clear following recent events at Pikesville High School, where the former athletic director was charged with multiple serious offenses. His ability to obtain a position at Pikesville High without adequate vetting highlights critical weaknesses in Maryland’s educator hiring and oversight processes. This failure of accountability puts students at serious risk and underscores the urgent need for stronger statewide vetting standards to prevent potential lapses within Maryland and across state lines.

We entrust teachers and school personnel with our most precious resource—our children. The individuals we place in classrooms across the state have a profound impact on students’ development, well-being, and safety. Unfortunately, gaps in educator screening processes have allowed individuals with histories of misconduct to move between school systems undetected. We must close those gaps to ensure that only qualified, ethical, and responsible educators serve in our schools.

SB 845 strengthens the educator screening process statewide by requiring all LEAs to first become associate members of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). Then they must utilize the NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse to screen all current educators and new applicants for educator positions in Maryland schools.

NASDTEC’s Clearinghouse is a trusted, nationwide database that allows states and school systems to share critical information about educators, including any certification revocations, disciplinary actions, or ethical violations that may not otherwise be disclosed in standard background checks. By requiring its use, SB 845 ensures that every Maryland school system has access to the most complete and up-to-date records before hiring or continuing employment.

This commonsense bill does not add burden to school districts. It raises potential red flags that require further investigation. SB 845 is about protecting students, supporting responsible hiring decisions, and upholding the integrity of Maryland's education system. A statewide approach to educator screening ensures that all school systems adopt best practices for vetting employees.

Every child deserves to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, and every parent deserves to know that those entrusted with their child's education have been thoroughly and properly vetted. SB 845 helps achieve that by providing another tool for administrators to use in their hiring process to add another element of security to prevent individuals with a history of misconduct from slipping through the cracks and harming students or school personnel.