

Testimony in Support of SB0673.pdf

Uploaded by: Dhruv Dobariya

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB0673

Presented by Dhruv Dobariya

On Behalf of Illuminate Maryland

Maryland General Assembly – 03/05/2025

Dear Senator Hettleman, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dhruv Dobariya, a sophomore from River Hill High School, and I am proud to testify today on behalf of Illuminate Maryland, a student-led advocacy organization dedicated to equity, accessibility, and community well-being. Our mission is to ensure that Maryland's youth have a voice in shaping policies that affect their education and future. Today, I urge you to support SB0673, which establishes the Maryland STEM Program to expand access to high-quality STEM education and create new opportunities for students across the state.

As a student deeply invested in STEM education, I have witnessed firsthand how access to strong STEM programs can transform lives. However, I have also seen the disparities that exist in different school districts, where students in underfunded schools lack the resources, mentorship, and hands-on experiences necessary to succeed in STEM fields. A close friend of mine, who dreamed of pursuing a career in engineering, struggled due to the lack of advanced STEM coursework and extracurricular opportunities in his school. Without access to proper resources, he was forced to seek out expensive private programs—an option that many students simply cannot afford. His experience is not unique. Too many students in Maryland are being left behind because their schools do not have the funding or infrastructure to support rigorous STEM education.

SB0673 will help bridge this gap by ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or zip code, have access to high-quality STEM learning opportunities. By establishing a statewide STEM program, this bill will expand curriculum development, provide funding for resources, and create partnerships with industry leaders to give students hands-on experiences in science, technology, engineering, and math. These initiatives are essential in preparing Maryland's youth for the modern workforce and ensuring that our state remains a leader in innovation.

Some may argue that expanding STEM programs will require significant investment, but this bill is an investment in our future. STEM fields drive economic growth, and ensuring students have access to these opportunities will lead to a stronger workforce, increased innovation, and greater equity in education. The long-term benefits of a well-prepared STEM workforce far outweigh any initial costs.

Illuminate Maryland stands firmly in support of SB0673, and we urge the committee to issue a favorable report. By passing this bill, Maryland can ensure that every student has the tools, resources, and support they need to succeed in STEM and beyond.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Dhruv Dobariya
President | Illuminate Maryland
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240-761-0707

Adam Katz Teach NJ SB 673 STEM Testimony 3-5-2025.

Uploaded by: Michael Rubin

Position: FAV



March 5, 2025

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair

The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

SB 673 – Education – Maryland STEM Program

Position: Support

My name is Adam Katz and I have been involved with the New Jersey STEM Education program in my state since its inception. Now in its fifth year, we have seen this program grow tremendously, with teacher participation growing seventeen-fold since its first year, giving more opportunity to both public school teachers and nonpublic schools. We are already seeing even more applications for this upcoming round (program year six) than ever before.

[Here](#), you can see the New Jersey Department of Education Guidance on the website outlining the program and the process for teachers and schools to apply. And [here](#), you can see the FAQs.

Over these five years, the New Jersey Department of Education has worked with both schools and teachers to achieve a program that is beneficial to everyone. My role, working for a nonprofit Teach Coalition, is to promote the program and recruit teachers and schools.

Based on the success of this program in New Jersey, I urge the committee members to vote favorably.

I look forward to answering any questions that may arise at the hearing.

Adam Katz

Katza@teachcoalition.org

Teach MD SB 673 STEM Program 3.5.25 Written Testim

Uploaded by: Michael Rubin

Position: FAV



March 5, 2025

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

SB 673 – Education – Maryland STEM Program

Position: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today.

Teach MD is the Maryland division of Teach Coalition (a project of the Orthodox Union), advocating on behalf of over 30 Jewish schools enrolling nearly 9,000 students within the state.

Teachers are the foundation for a classroom and student success. Engaging teachers introduce children to the possibilities of learning. Learning how to learn – especially in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields - is more important now than ever. New frontiers are being explored every day in artificial intelligence, biology and gene editing, medical care, and consumer technology. It behooves us to ensure that Maryland is the place where these cutting edge advancements are made.

However, public and nonpublic schools across Maryland struggle to hire and retain highly qualified teachers, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects¹. Many of these teachers leave the world of education for more lucrative careers. Each year, about 2,000 public school teaching jobs are unfilled on the first day of school and over a tenth of Maryland public school teachers quit teaching². Nonpublic schools face the same staffing challenges, often scrambling to find experienced teachers to teach STEM courses.

The proposed Maryland STEM Teacher Program in SB673 addresses this problem by encouraging current and retired public school teachers to teach STEM subjects in nonpublic schools. Current teachers will be able to teach in the afternoons, increasing their earning potential as teachers. Retired teachers will be encouraged to rejoin the workforce at times that fit their schedule.

The program mirrors an existing one in New Jersey, wherein over 115 public school teachers participated in the most recent cycle. With buy-in from dozens of school districts, nonpublic schools, and public school teachers themselves, this program is a model for effective public-private partnerships.

We respectfully request the legislature strengthen STEM education and educators in Maryland by supporting SB673. The Maryland STEM Teacher Program is a crucial step towards enhancing STEM education and better learning experiences while addressing teacher shortages.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Maryland State Department of Education. (2022). *Maryland Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*.

Retrieved

from <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf> on February 27, 2025.

² Maryland State Department of Education. (2024). *Maryland Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*.

Retrieved from <https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2024/0521/Maryland-Teacher-Workforce-Supply-Demand-and-Diversity-A.pdf> on February 27, 2025.

Teach MD SB673 STEM Testimony 3-5-25.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Rubin

Position: FAV



March 5, 2025

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair

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SB 673 – Education – Maryland STEM Program

Position: Support

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The proposed Maryland STEM Teacher Program in SB673 addresses this problem by encouraging current and retired public school teachers to teach STEM subjects in nonpublic schools with no interference with their responsibilities as public school teachers. Current teachers will be able to teach in the afternoons, increasing their earning potential as teachers. Retired teachers will be encouraged to rejoin the workforce at times that fit their schedule.

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Agudah testimony - SB673 - STEM Program - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Rabbi Ariel Sadwin

Position: FAV



**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
& SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE**

MARCH 5, 2025

SENATE BILL 673

EDUCATION - MARYLAND STEM PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED

TESTIMONY OF RABBI ARIEL SADWIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AGUDATH ISRAEL OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland, and on behalf of the 10,000 students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state. Agudath Israel of Maryland issues this testimony in support of Senate Bill 673.

Senate Bill 673 would establish the Maryland STEM Program to enhance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in our state by providing additional compensation to current or retired public school teachers for teaching STEM classes at local nonpublic schools. The importance of a proper STEM education is widely acknowledged as a vital component to a well-rounded elementary and secondary educational experience. Oftentimes, schools struggle to find competent, high-quality teachers willing to take the burdensome (though ultimately rewarding) task of instructing young students in these subjects. Helping all our Maryland schools to engage experienced, seasoned educators can help ensure all young Marylanders receive the proper grounding necessary for their future success.

In addition to empowering students, the Maryland STEM Program provides worthy benefits to public school educators by providing an additional source of income, thus ensuring their financial security. Retired public school teachers would be able to continue their life work of educating our youth even after moving on from full-time teaching.

The public and nonpublic schools that comprise Maryland's K-12 educational system share the mission of providing a proper education to all Maryland students. We respectfully ask the committee members to continue this shared partnership, and ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 673.

SB 673

Uploaded by: Senator Hettleman Senator Hettleman

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN
SB673 EDUCATION - MARYLAND STEM PROGRAM – ESTABLISHED

Rapid technological advancements are our daily reality. To maintain our leadership in science and technology discovery, we must create an approach to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education that prepares and advances students for this future.¹ Our communities must continue to develop students who are skilled in these fields and invest in new research and innovation infrastructures that include all people, regardless of their background. SB673 is a creative solution to preparing all students for a future in these fields, while incentivizing professionals who teach STEM.

The unfortunate reality for many teachers is that they often look for a second job to make ends meet. Frequently, these supplemental jobs have little connection to their professional field. SB673 provides an opportunity for additional compensation for current public school teachers to teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at non-public schools. This legislation, which benefits all stakeholders, duplicates an existing program that has had proven implementation success in New Jersey.

There are many reasons why students attend a nonpublic school and families of all backgrounds and economic levels choose this option to best serve their child's unique needs. While acknowledging the ideological opposition for funding for nonpublic schools, we structured this program so all funding flows through public school districts, with no public funds transferring to nonpublic school coffers. This program will not be funded with existing public-school dollars. Instead, this program will be funded with a new, separate appropriation of \$250,000 in the annual budget. This program directly serves interest of public school district in many ways:

- By increasing the earning opportunity for public school STEM programs, it potentially eases recruitment and retention of STEM teachers in these districts by

¹ National Science Foundation. *STEM Education for the Future- A Visioning Report*. 2020. <https://www.nsf.gov/edu/Materials/STEM%20Education%20for%20the%20Future%20-%202020%20Visioning%20Report.pdf>

giving the opportunity for public school teachers to teach after the school day ends.

- Increases the supply of STEM teachers, easing the STEM teacher scarcity that is being felt nationwide.

Allowing current teachers to supplement their income within their professional field is a win-win. This program not only benefits the students in nonpublic schools, but benefits our community by exposing ALL students to high quality STEM education, and supports public schools by making it easier to recruit and retain quality teachers.

This legislation allows current teachers to make extra income after regular school hours, making sure they are compensated at their current rate. It supports *all* students by teaching essential skills in STEM by experts in field. For students to compete in today's hi-tech economy, our state cannot afford for *anyone* to fall behind. For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report.

3-5-2025_SB673_Ed-MD STEM Pgm - Established_LWVMD.

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: UNF



TESTIMONY TO THE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SB 673 Education – Maryland STEM Program – Established

Position: Unfavorable

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: March 5, 2025

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) is a nonpartisan organization that supports policies which provide an equitable, adequate and quality education for all children, especially those who are underserved. LWVMD supports state funding to all public elementary and secondary schools at a sufficient level to eliminate inequities. Further, LWVMD opposes using public funding for nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. Therefore, LWVMD requests an unfavorable report on **HB673 Education – Maryland STEM program - Established** because the bill will shift funds from public to nonpublic schools.

SB 673 proposes a mandated appropriation to establish the Maryland STEM Program in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) that will provide additional compensation to a current or retired public school educator who teaches STEM classes in nonpublic schools. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, local schools would have to notify all current and retired teachers about the opportunity to participate. The Governor would include an appropriation of \$250,000 to fund the program, which would start on July 1, 2025.

The LWVMD recognizes the importance of Maryland remaining competitive in STEM education, an approach to teaching and learning that integrates the content and skills of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Nonetheless, LWVMD opposes the establishment of a funding stream that benefits private and nonpublic schools. Public dollars should fund public schools and not off-set costs for private education.

The LWVMD acknowledges that the Bill may benefit current teachers through the promise of extra income, and encourage retired teachers to rejoin the workforce. However, during the time that educators work at nonpublic schools, they would continue to be employees of public institutions, an arrangement that may have implications, as yet undetermined, for compensation and performance evaluation.

The LWVMD believes that public dollars should fund public schools, and not be used offset the cost of private education. Any educational initiatives using State or local taxpayer dollars should be for public school students and staff. Providing support for programs in nonpublic schools represents a departure the State's Constitutional mandate to establish and fund a thorough and efficient system of public education. In particular, the Bill's mandated appropriation to support nonpublic education is ill-timed when there are proposed budget cuts to funds needed to fulfill promise of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.\

LWVMD opposes Senate Bill 673 and urges an unfavorable committee report.

SB 673 - Education - Maryland STEM Program - Estab

Uploaded by: Nia Callender

Position: UNF



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

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BILL: SB 673

TITLE: Education - Maryland STEM Program - Established

DATE: March 5, 2025

POSITION: Unfavorable

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **opposes** Senate Bill 673.

This bill establishes the Maryland STEM Program within the Department of Education to provide additional compensation to educators who teach STEM classes at nonpublic schools. It also incentivizes current teachers to obtain the necessary qualifications to teach STEM subjects, thereby improving statewide access to STEM education to address workforce demands in the state. The bill authorizes nonpublic schools to apply for the program and requires participating nonpublic schools to report certain information to the Department annually. Additionally, it allows local school systems to object to certain teachers participating in the program under specific circumstances. Furthermore, the bill mandates that the Department develop a teacher interest survey and share certain information with nonpublic schools upon request. It also requires local school systems to inform relevant teachers about the program annually and distribute the interest survey to certain teachers each year. For each fiscal year, the governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$250,000 to the Department for grants under the program.

PSSAM opposes the establishment of any funding stream that financially benefits private and nonpublic schools. The financial needs of our public school students must take priority over those who choose a private or parochial education. Any educational initiatives funded using State or local taxpayer dollars should only be for public school students and staff.

While this legislation would financially benefit teachers, the legislation is flawed in a number of ideological and practical ways. The bill contemplates new funds diverted from public education, but also requires that local school systems participate in the administration of the program. Local school systems must also notify all current teachers from their system about the opportunity to participate in the program, and share the teacher interest survey developed by the Department with all teachers employed at the local school system. The legislation is silent regarding any retirement or other employee-related compensation complications this might create. These administrative expectations are unreasonable and excessive given the existing responsibilities of local school systems in delivering public education in taxpayer-supported schools. Providing this level of support for private institutions is a serious departure from the State's constitutional mandate to provide a fair and equitable public education system.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 673 and kindly requests an unfavorable report.

SB 673 - MSEA - UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Zwerling

Position: UNF

UNFAVORABLE
Senate Bill 673
Education – Maryland STEM Program - Established

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Budget & Taxation committee
March 5, 2025

Samantha Zwerling
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association respectfully opposes Senate Bill 673, which creates the Maryland STEM Program in the Maryland State Department of Education. This program intends to help bolster STEM education at private schools by compensating public school educators to teach STEM classes at private schools in their off-hours. The bill goes on to mandate an annual \$250,000 appropriation to support the program.

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).

While we appreciate the work of the sponsor to reach out and try to address our concerns, ultimately MSEA believes that public dollars should fund public schools and not off-set costs for private education. At a time when there are contemplated cuts to public schools that serve students who need the most supports – students from backgrounds of poverty, multilingual learners, and students in concentrated poverty – we do not believe the state should provide additional funding to private schools.

Additionally, as introduced, any school can participate in this program and can gain access to taxpayer funded teachers, no matter the school's tuition rate or endowment balance. Currently, for a school to participate in the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) voucher program and the Nonpublic Textbook Program, the school cannot charge more than \$21,023 for annual tuition. Moreover, the bill does not stipulate that participating schools have a nondiscrimination policy for students or staff.

Ultimately, this bill is unnecessary if the goal is to employ public school teachers in private schools as a second job. While MSEA's goal would be to make one job enough, we know that is not always the case and educators seek other employment. Teachers can already teach at a private school in their off hours from the public school. We are asking our public schools and MSDE to do so much already, it seems unnecessary to ask them to implement the administrative burdens in this bill as well.

MSEA respectfully urges an Unfavorable Report on Senate Bill 673.

SB0673- State Board- LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Carey Wright

Position: INFO

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 673 - *Education – Maryland STEM Program – Established*

DATE: March 5, 2025

POSITION: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration of Senate Bill (SB) 673 - *Education – Maryland STEM Program - Established*, which incentivizes Maryland public school teachers licensed in STEM subjects to teach in nonpublic schools by offering them a grant award. SB 673 requires MSDE to manage the program, including establishing and implementing application procedures, providing submitted applications to the local education agencies, evaluating objections from local education agencies, and awarding grants to local education agencies for dissemination to eligible teachers. Additionally, MSDE is charged with establishing the amount of each grant awarded to a participant, which must be at least equal to the number of hours the teacher teaches STEM classes.

The areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics continue to be critical shortage areas in Maryland. During the 2024-2025 school year, local education agencies reported 76.3 vacancies in STEM areas. An additional 738.6 STEM teachers hold a conditional license, meaning they have not yet completed a teacher preparation program. Additionally, the State teacher and substitute shortage often results in teachers having fewer planning times, something that is collectively bargained. As such, it may be challenging for local education agencies to allow STEM teachers to spend part of their days traveling to and teaching in nonpublic schools during the teacher's regular workday.

SB 673 defines a nonpublic school as “an elementary or secondary school in the state that is not part of the public elementary and secondary education system of the state.” In Maryland, nonpublic schools fall into three distinct categories. Two of the categories of nonpublic schools are considered “approved” because they hold a Certificate of Approval issued by the Maryland State Board of Education. The third type, registered church-exempt schools, are exempt from the education regulations set forth by the Maryland State Board of Education because they are governed and operated by a bona fide church organization. Of the three categories of nonpublic schools in Maryland, only publicly funded nonpublic schools approved under Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.09.10 require teachers to hold an educator license. These schools would technically meet the definition of “nonpublic school” in SB 673. The other two types of nonpublic schools are not required to employ licensed teachers. These schools, often referred to as “private pay schools” educate students who are placed by the parents/guardians knowing that the teachers do not require teacher licensure.

Finally, it is worth noting that SB 673 does not provide a comparable incentive for public school teachers teaching in STEM areas.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate Senate Bill 673. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D. (Executive Director of Government Affairs), akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov, for any additional information.