



Testimony - HB 551, Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees -
Salaries
Favorable

House Ways & Means Committee

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

Honorable Chairwoman Atterbeary & Members of the House Ways & Means Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents over 23,000 workers across Maryland including over 10,000 educational support staff in our Montgomery County Public Schools. Our members have a role in the lives of Marylanders from cradle to career. We wish to express our support for Maryland House Bill 551. As a strong advocate for the future of our education system and the well-being of those who dedicate their lives to educating our children, we emphatically support this critical piece of legislation.

Public school employees are more than just teachers and administrators, they are also educational support staff, who all play an essential role in shaping the future of Maryland's children. Their work is vital to fostering a generation of informed, responsible, and compassionate citizens. However, the current pay scale for these professionals does not reflect the immense value of their contributions. The demands placed on educators and school employees have grown over the years, yet their compensation has not kept pace with the rising cost of living, the increased responsibilities they shoulder, or the growing educational challenges we face.

Raising the salary to \$60,000 per year is not just about ensuring fair compensation, but about recognizing the dedication and tireless efforts of those who work in our schools. This increase would make a significant difference in attracting and retaining talented professionals in our public education system. As it stands, many highly qualified educators are forced to take on additional jobs or leave the profession entirely due to financial constraints. By increasing salaries, we will be able to better support these hardworking individuals, helping to alleviate financial stress and enabling them to focus fully on what matters most: the education of our children.

Moreover, competitive pay is essential for the continued success of Maryland's public education system. Studies consistently show that job satisfaction and retention are closely tied to compensation. When teachers and staff are fairly compensated, they are more likely to remain in their roles, develop their expertise, and foster long-term, meaningful relationships with students. Additionally, fair compensation attracts more people to the education profession, ensuring that Maryland can continue to hire the best and brightest for our students.

House Bill 551 is an investment in our future. By investing in our public school employees, we are investing in the future of Maryland's students and our communities. It is time that we show our all educators: teachers, support staff, and administrators the respect and recognition they deserve through fair compensation.

In conclusion, House Bill 551 is a timely and necessary step toward improving the recruitment and retention of educational support staff in Maryland. We urge you to pass this bill in order to create a more attractive, economically practical, and morale-centered approach to educational careers in Maryland.

We thank Delegate Feldmark for her leadership on this issue. We ask you all to support HB 551 and provide a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.

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