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SB 764 - Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

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SUPPORT

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Maryland State & D.C. AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 764. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

SB 764 establishes a minimum wage of \$25 per hour for Education Support Professionals (ESPs). 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 a minimum wage rate for ESPs. This fails to keep pace with the rising cost of living and rising cost of goods, leaving them struggling to provide for their families. SB 764 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 764.



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