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Patrick Moran – President

SB 764 – Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 3, 2026

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 supports Senate Bill 764. Senate Bill 764 establishes a minimum wage rate of $25 per hour for education support professionals beginning July 1, 2028. The legislation also requires the Maryland State Department of Education to report to the Governor and General Assembly on or before December 1, 2026, on an estimate of the total cost of implementing a $25 per hour minimum wage for education support professionals.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 represents approximately 55,000 public service workers across varying levels of government including city, county, state, and higher education. Our Council is proud to represent thousands of K-12 school support staff across Maryland. AFSCME members are on the frontlines every day delivering critical public services our communities depend on.

School support staff perform essential functions every day for our public schools, and also, maintained critical school operations during the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown. School support staff transport students safely to and from school; they prepare meals, so students are well fed and prepared to learn; they keep our schools safe, clean, and well maintained; and they ensure administrative operations are executed in a timely manner. In short, our public education system is entirely dependent upon school support staff.

However, school support staff are not compensated at a level commensurate with the essential functions they provide to our public education system. Far too many school support staff are struggling to make ends meet, and as a result, school support staff positions remain difficult to fill, which creates unsustainable workloads on existing employees. According to analyses by the Maryland State Department of Education, 34% of ESPs earn less than $25 per hour, and approximately 2,670 ESP positions were vacant, statewide. This data identifies both the number of ESPs who are struggling to make ends meet, while also illustrating the difficulty of recruiting and retaining individuals who are dedicated to careers in our school system. Senate Bill 764 will move our state in the right direction of providing competitive wages for school support staff, and in turn, attract more people into these essential positions.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 764.