

Position: FAVORABLE

Bill: SB 957 – Education – Career Ladder – National Board Certification Associated Salary Increases

Committee: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mary Pitta, I teach at Severn River Middle School in Anne Arundel County and respectfully submit this testimony in **support of SB 957**.

I first earned my National Board Certification in 2007 and successfully renewed it in 2016. As one of the early National Board Certified Teachers in my county, I was frequently asked to share my expertise with other educators. Administrators and colleagues recognized the value of the certification and the experience it represents.

Before our district established formal support roles such as Right Start Advisors, I was asked to mentor new teachers. I gladly took on this responsibility because I cared deeply about helping them succeed, helping their students thrive, and supporting the strength of our county's music program. At the time, there was no additional compensation for this work. I did it because I believed in supporting my colleagues and because the professional respect associated with National Board Certification meant something.

I am currently pursuing another renewal of my certification. As part of this process, I am being mentored by a colleague who first achieved National Board Certification in 2019 and renewed in 2023. I value their support and the collaborative nature of this process. However, this experience has highlighted an unintended inequity in the current system. My colleague currently receives an additional \$18,000 per year associated with their certification. Despite having first earned National Board Certification in 2007 and maintaining it through renewal since 2016—twelve more years of certification than my mentor—I receive \$8,000 less per year for the same credential. The difference is not in commitment, experience, or dedication to the profession, but simply in the timing of when the certification was earned. SB 957 would help correct this type of disparity and ensure that long-standing National Board Certified Teachers continue to receive the recognition and compensation their expertise represents.

National Board Certification represents years of experience, deep reflection on teaching practice, and a commitment to continual professional growth. Teachers who pursue and maintain this certification strengthen their schools, mentor colleagues, and improve outcomes for students. Maryland has invested deeply in strengthening its educator workforce. Ensuring that long-standing National Board Certified Teachers continue to receive the recognition associated with this rigorous credential reflects that commitment.

Please support this bill to ensure that the teachers who stepped forward early to pursue National Board Certification—and who have since led, mentored, and encouraged others to follow that path—are fairly recognized and compensated for their expertise.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
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