

Chair and Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 957. My name is Lindsey Ells, and I am a veteran teacher who has spent many years in the classroom and now serve as a Literacy Teacher. I have also continued to grow professionally through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification process.

Senate Bill 957 addresses an unintended issue that arose from the original Maryland Blueprint legislation. While the Blueprint has created many positive changes for students and educators, it has also left a small group of veteran teachers—like myself—without recognition for the work required to achieve National Board Certification.

The number of teachers affected is relatively small, so the cost to correct this oversight would be limited. However, the impact on those educators is meaningful. National Board Certification requires years of dedication, reflection, and documented evidence of effective teaching and student learning.

Teachers who complete this process often take on leadership roles in their schools. We mentor colleagues, support new teachers, and help guide others through the National Board process, strengthening the professional culture the Blueprint aims to build.

Because of how the law was implemented, some experienced teachers are not receiving recognition that reflects their accomplishments. Senate Bill 957 offers a fair and practical way to address this gap.

This bill does not create a major new cost for the state. Instead, it corrects a narrow policy issue affecting a small number of highly accomplished educators who have already demonstrated their commitment to excellence.

Passing Senate Bill 957 would show that Maryland values experienced teachers and the high standards that strengthen our schools. It ensures the Blueprint's goal of elevating the teaching profession is applied fairly to those who have already invested so much in that work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Lindsey Ells, NBCT