



Testimony - SB 904, Education - Public Schools - Professional Development
Favorable

House Ways & Means Committee

April 1, 2026

Christopher C. Cano, MPA

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

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

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports Senate Bill 904. Our union represents tens of thousands of educational support professionals in Montgomery County, including paraeducators, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, building service staff, and other frontline school employees who keep our public schools running safely and effectively every day.

Senate Bill 904 addresses a longstanding issue facing education support professionals, the lack of consistent, paid, high-quality professional development for the workers who are quite often the closest to supporting students.

SB 904 makes a long-overdue investment in paraeducators and other education support professionals through the creation of a statewide system of paid, in-person professional development during the workday. These workers are essential partners in student learning, health, safety, and behavior support, yet they are too often denied the training and time they need to succeed. By requiring at least two days of high-quality professional development each year—and by ensuring that training includes crisis de-escalation, safe physical restraint, collaboration with teachers, and job-specific skills—this bill directly improves working conditions and student outcomes.

SEIU Local 500 also strongly supports the bill's clear statement that nothing in this law may diminish existing collective bargaining agreements or employment benefits. This respect for workers' rights and negotiated protections is essential.

Educational support professionals have historically been excluded from decision-making and underinvested in, despite their critical role in our schools. Senate Bill 904 begins to correct that imbalance by valuing their labor, protecting their jobs, and investing in their professional growth.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 904.

Thank you for your time and consideration.