

Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals

Dear Members of the Ways and Means and Appropriations Committee,

This testimony will be brief, as I only happened upon this legislation while I was submitting testimony for another bill. I encourage you to issue a favorable report on HB1205, which guarantees a minimum wage of \$25 per hour to administrative support professionals.

As a substitute teacher in Harford County Public Schools, I see daily the amount of work and skill that goes into being a paraeducator and inclusion helper. It has blown my mind for years how little these professionals are paid. Paraeducators and inclusion helpers support some of our most vulnerable and challenging students. For some of these students, it takes a very special personality and skill set to work with them effectively. How can school districts expect to attract qualified candidates when they can make a better wage working retail?

Like all of our public school students, special education students deserve to have qualified, motivated individuals working with them. Likewise, these individuals deserve to be paid a living wage for how much they put in to helping these students make the best of their education.

With this in mind, I ask you to issue a **favorable report on HB1205**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracie Ulmes

Joppa, MD