



House Bill 1205 -- Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
House Ways and Means Committee and House Appropriations Committee
March 11, 2026
Oppose

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, opposes House Bill 1205 -- *Education - Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals*.

House Bill 1205 requires local school boards to pay education support professionals (ESPs) a minimum wage of \$25 per hour by July 1, 2028. "Education support professionals" are defined as noncertificated public school employees designated as part of a nonsupervisory bargaining unit.

While well-intentioned, MCCC contends that decisions regarding compensation for education support professionals (ESPs) are best made at the local level by school systems that understand their unique workforce needs, budget constraints, and community priorities. Mandating a statewide minimum wage of \$25 per hour for ESPs would increase personnel costs for local governments, many of which are already managing tight budgets and competing demands. Such a requirement reduces local flexibility and may ultimately force school systems to make difficult trade-offs in staffing or educational services. Additionally, MCCC supports allowing the market to dictate pay and benefits as a more effective approach than imposing statewide wage mandates.

An additional unintended consequence of this bill would be its impact on the broader labor market dynamics affecting childcare, a sector already experiencing workforce shortages. Many childcare workers leave for higher-paying jobs in public school systems, reducing the availability of quality childcare and early childhood education for working families. By further widening the wage gap between school system positions and childcare providers, this bill risks accelerating that trend. Reduced childcare access is a growing challenge that negatively affects labor force participation, particularly among women.

For these reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce opposes House Bill 1205 and respectfully requests an unfavorable report.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), on behalf of its members, champions the growth of business opportunities, strategic infrastructure investments, and a strong workforce to position Metro Maryland as a premier regional, national, and global business location. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent, non-profit membership organization.

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