

SB 764/HB 1205: Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals:
Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Budget & Taxation Committee and Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE SB 764/HB 1205**. These bills would mandate that county boards of education pay education support professionals (non-certificated, nonsupervisory school staff like custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and paraeducators) at least \$25 per hour starting July 1, 2028, with a required state report on the massive implementation costs by December 1, 2026.

While valuing the important work of school support staff, this aggressive wage mandate is fiscally irresponsible and unsustainable. Maryland public schools already face severe budget constraints, teacher shortages, and rising operational costs amid inflation and enrollment pressures. Forcing a jump to \$25/hour—far above current state minimum wage trends and many local pay scales—would impose enormous unfunded or underfunded obligations on county boards, leading to:

- Drastic cuts to other education priorities (class sizes, programs, supplies, or teacher pay).
- Tax increases or borrowing to cover the shortfall.
- Job reductions or outsourcing in support roles to control costs.
- Disproportionate impacts on rural/suburban districts where funding is tighter than in wealthier areas.

The required cost report will likely reveal billions in statewide expenses, yet the bill pushes forward without viable funding mechanisms or a phase-in tied to state aid increases. This top-down mandate bypasses local negotiations and collective bargaining realities, risking disruptions to school operations and student services.

Maryland should support fair wages through targeted state aid, incentives, or negotiated agreements—not rigid, one-size-fits-all mandates that strain local budgets and could harm the very students and staff they aim to help.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against SB 764/HB 1205** and oppose this unfunded, burdensome wage requirement on public schools.

Thank you for your attention to this critical education funding matter.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals