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**Written Testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee
SB 720 - Education - Artificial Intelligence - Guidelines, Professional Development, and
Collaborative (Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act)
April 1, 2026**

FAVORABLE

Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee: AFT Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 720 - The Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act. As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to rapidly transform our economy and society, Maryland's students and educators cannot afford to be left behind or worse, exposed to technology without proper guidance. This bill provides a critical roadmap to ensure that AI is integrated into our schools safely, ethically, and equitably.

Currently, many school districts are operating in a policy vacuum, forced to decide on their own how to handle AI tools without statewide standards. SB 720 addresses this by requiring the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop guidelines and an online platform for students, parents, and educators. By creating a unified framework that prioritizes human-centered learning and evidence-based methods, we can help ensure that a student's zip code does not determine the quality or safety of the digital tools they use in the classroom.

This legislation recognizes that technology is only as effective as the people who use it. By mandating professional development and establishing the Maryland AI Education Collaborative, SB 720 helps to ensure that our teachers are not just passive users of software, but informed leaders who can teach AI literacy as a workforce skill. The bill's focus on ethical procurement and annual certifications also provides necessary guardrails against bias and data privacy risks, protecting our children from the unintended consequences of unregulated technology.

SB 720 is a proactive, common-sense measure that prepares Maryland for a future where AI is a standard part of life. It moves us away from a reactive approach and toward a strategic, "AI-ready" educational system that benefits every resident of our state. Again, we urge a favorable report. Thank you.

