



MARCH 11, 2026

# Education Support Staff Deserve a Living Wage

## Position Statement in Support of House Bill 1205

*Given before the House Ways and Means and Appropriations Committees*

Educating Maryland children is one of the most important things we do together as a state. There are a wide range of professionals involved in a student's education: teachers leading instruction, administrators supporting the teachers, and people classified as support staff who are supporting teachers as classroom aides, feeding children so they're ready to learn, and making sure school buildings are safe and clean. While Maryland has made recent progress in increasing compensation for teachers, many education support professionals are still paid far less than is needed to afford a basic standard of living in Maryland. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 1205 because it would increase wages for essential school staff.**

Statewide, about one-third of education support professionals earn less than \$25 per hour, according to data submitted to the General Assembly last year. However, the percentages vary significantly from county to county. In some jurisdictions, more than 70% of support staff earn less than \$25 per hour.<sup>i</sup>

The bill that ultimately put Maryland on the path to a \$15 minimum wage was introduced in January 2019. Since then, prices throughout the economy have increased by 29%.<sup>ii</sup> Today, a single adult in Maryland working full time and not caring for children would need to take home \$25.94 per hour to afford a basic living standard, according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator.<sup>iii</sup>

Working for a school or in another public sector job should come with family-supporting wages. Instead, low wages too often leave education support professionals working multiple jobs or relying on public assistance programs to make ends meet. Increasing pay for the workers who help care for our kids throughout the school day will help schools recruit and retain highly qualified staff, reduce turnover, and support local communities, as low-income households are very likely to spend any pay increases at local businesses.

**For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Committee make a favorable report on House Bill 1205.**

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<sup>i</sup> Department of Legislative Services, Fiscal and Policy Note for HB 1205, 2026. [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/fnotes/bil\\_0005/hb1205.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/fnotes/bil_0005/hb1205.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers

<sup>iii</sup> MIT Living Wage Calculator, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/24>

While this estimate includes necessities that for some families are met through non-wage income such as employer benefits, low-wage workers are among those least likely to receive such benefits.