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I am writing to you in support of HB 522 and SB 572

The Home and hospital program needs all of the support and resources you can possibly provide. When I was six or seven, I was stuck in the hospital for many, many months following a series of surgeries. During that time, I met with a tutor who was part of the home and hospital program. I won't tell you my exact age, but I attended elementary school in the 1980s and graduated high school in the 90s. Even all of these decades later, I remember the tutor who would visit to help me keep up with school while I was unable to attend my elementary school in Baltimore City.

The support of the home and hospital tutor was really crucial at that early stage in my learning and I can promise you it mattered. At the time, the tutor was just another friend in the hospital, but looking back on my education I know how important it was to keep up and not fall behind. The visits from the tutor provided a crucial link to normalcy when I was living in a hospital in a situation that was anything but normal.

After my time in the hospital and after the tutoring with the program, I thrived in the Baltimore City Public Schools system. The teachers in William Paca Elementary school helped shape me into a person who loves to learn. If I had struggled in my transition back to school, I wonder if I would have been as successful? This program worked very well for me. I went on to college and ultimately earned a PhD from Johns Hopkins. Now, I have a family and we live in Howard County. I am proud to lend my support for this legislation.

I have a much different perspective on education now that I am a parent instead of a student. As a parent it is easy to imagine the medical diagnoses, emotional challenges and a variety of other situations that could put a student in a position where they desperately need the help and support of the home and hospital program. It is clear to me that the students who need the home and hospital program are the most vulnerable within any school system. They can't physically attend school and rely on this program as their lifeline to education. They need the best that their school system can provide and not just what meets a minimal standard.

These students need the protection and the power of the state legislature to ensure that all students in the state receive the same benefit from the home and hospital program. Please pass this legislation so support, oversight and review creates a first step to making the home and hospital program the best it can possibly be.

Thank you,
Stephanie Mummert