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Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Chair, Transportation and the
Environment

Oversight Committee on Personnel



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Nonpublic Special Education Schools - State Contribution – Increase (HB 1365)

Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman—Favorable

Thank you Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee. I come before you today to present HB 1365: Nonpublic Special Education Schools - State Contribution – Increase. As you are all aware, there is a type of student who does not often come up in our debates and discussion regarding education. These students are typically referred to, somewhat incorrectly in my view, as “non-public placements.” What that means is that the student has special needs and as the result of their public school Individualized Education Plan (IEP), they are placed in a non-public special needs school but funded by public dollars because it has been determined that they have special needs which cannot be met by the typical public school system and programs.¹ These schools, which predominantly contain publicly funded students, exist in about thirteen of our counties and many students cross jurisdictional lines for their services.

The costs of educating these children are shared by the local jurisdiction and the state. The local jurisdiction pays to the special needs school the local share of a calculated “basic cost” used to calculate the cost of educating a non-special needs student plus 200% of the basic cost plus 30% of the remaining cost of the program in excess of the first two components. The state then pays the difference between the approved cost of the special needs program and what the county pays.²

The purpose of the legislation before you is to require an increase in the State contribution to the cost of educating our children with disabilities in nonpublic schools by 4% in fiscal year 2023 specifically to address the significant salary gap between those teachers educating special needs students at these schools and those in the typical public schools.

In order for nonpublic schools to retain skilled teachers, they must be able to competitively compensate their staff. In 2020 the Maryland State Department of Education conducted a study which found inequities between the compensation of public school teachers and that of nonpublic special needs teachers. Average teacher salaries in public schools and nonpublic special education schools differed by between \$3,600 and \$23,600, or between 7.3% and 25.8%,

¹ Md. Ed. Art. § 8-406.

² Md. Ed. Art. § 8-415.

depending on teacher education and experience. After accounting for differences in teachers' total paid hours, teachers' wages in public schools and nonpublic special education schools differed by between 23.3% and 40.7%.³

Nonpublic special education schools are vital to the fulfillment of the Individuals with Disabilities Act and state law. HB 1365 helps bridge the gap in salary between public and nonpublic special education teachers to ensure that special needs students who are recommended to attend nonpublic schools have access to the skilled teachers they need and deserve in order to achieve a quality education. I urge a favorable report.

³ "2020 Joint Chairmen's Report (Page 168): Public/Nonpublic Special Education Teacher Salary Parity," 2020 Joint Chairmen's Report (Page 168): Public/Nonpublic Special Education Teacher Salary Parity §