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SENATE HEARING- EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

SB 209:PROLONGED SCHOOL CLOSURE-EXTENSION OF EDUCATION SERVICES

HEARING DATE JANUARY 27,2021

POSITION:SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Senate Bill 209 would allow extended time and services paid for by the public school system for students with disabilities who need additional education and transitional services/linkage to state and federal agencies. Many of the students with disabilities who are 18 years old (plus) and will graduate this May 2021, have been without a comprehensive opportunity to meet transitioning goals and objectives necessary to succeed in the adult world. Job coaching and exploration has been minimized virtually and students who can work and volunteer are exiting school without important skills for their lifetime.

During virtual school, some students may have barely completed the diploma requirements, have suffered with poor grades, and had less opportunities to gain important educational and employment skills. Going to job sites with transition job coaching staff employed by school districts has completely ceased in many districts since March 2020. During the pre-pandemic time, transitioning students would go to job sites 3-5 times per week with coaches. Certain skills such as orientation to bus transit/mobility services, education on employment etiquette and essential job training have been unavailable to transitioning youth during this prolonged school closure. Virtual lessons are just not the same as hands-on job site training for our students.

Page 7,Section L, line 32 please strike "the court may reduce an award of compensatory education and replace with " a school IEP team or court can award a remedy of compensatory education or services by: (1) stays the same

(2) stays the same

IEP goals related to education may have been minimized during this prolonged closure and students with disabilities can still gain additional academic knowledge if more time in school is available. Schools should offer additional time for transitioning job skill training and exposure to various careers and ensure that every transitioning aged student will be a productive employee, college or career tech student (or volunteer) and, to the greatest extent possible, contribute as a tax paying citizen in Maryland.

Please support SB209 with amendments to extend, as needed, transitional learning experiences and education to transitional youth in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Lori E. Scott