

January 12, 2021

RE: HB 405  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Ways and Means Committee  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

**In Support of HB 405: Special Education – Judicial Actions – Attorney’s Fees and Related Costs.**

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates, Ways and Means Committee.

I am the parent of a child with multiple challenges and disabilities. He has been bounced between 504 plans and IEP plans over the course of 8 years within the AACPS system. After we initiated our rights to request that the county school system pay for an IEE, or outside professional assessment. We had a due process complaint filed on our family by AACPS when we did not agree with their assessment reports for my son’s intellectual and behavioral challenges and his disabilities.

Caring for a child with disabilities is an expensive undertaking for any family. There are lots of associated costs for therapies, specialists, doctors, medications and the list goes on and on. Many families that are in the public school system may encounter resistance to provide much needed services from their local school system officials.

Many families of children with disabilities soon find themselves embroiled in a due process hearing and ensuing legal battle with their local school district. An expensive and time-consuming process that is very emotionally and financially draining. All this just to get the services that a child needs to access their education in a fair and equitable manner, and in alignment with their non-disabled peers. It’s the law of the land, yet it is always an uphill fight in many Maryland school districts.

I ask for myself, and so many other families like mine, that you support HB 405. After going through an expensive due process hearing and potential legal court battle with a school system, special education families need this financial relief and to recover the legal fees that weigh heavy on many Maryland families.

We simply need to do better for our most vulnerable students and their families. Please ease their burden and return a favorable report on HB 405. In order to provide the financial relief needed by so many families for simply trying to get their child necessary services and equal access to a quality education here in Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB 405.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo, Parent and advocate for children with disabilities | Parent Advocacy Consortium  
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