

My name is Terrone Jerel Hill, and I am an employee of the Baltimore City Public School System, working for the past ten years as ESOL Paraeducator and now Team Support Professional. I also am a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union and serve on the PSRP Committee. On behalf of the BTU and our statewide union, AFT-Maryland, I ask for a favorable report to HB 1349, the bill that would form a workgroup to study the wages and compensation packages to the Education Support Personnel who are so vital to the education of Maryland's students.

I have worked for Baltimore City Public Schools for over ten years. I first came to the district as a long term sub because I was unemployed and needed a job. After my first long term assignment at Garrett Heights Elementary Middle School, I received mentorship from school administration and seasoned instructors. I learned curriculum, lesson plan preparation and instructional coaching. What I thought would be a temporary situation to earn money, has become a career filled with joy, commitment and compassion. After receiving a full time gainful employment opportunity with the district, I have enjoyed working with and serving numerous families in the city of Baltimore. Each day I wake up, I'm excited to go to work to interact with scholars. It is a great feeling to know that each day the work I do makes a positive impact in the lives of so many students and families. I hope to give the committee a sense of the vital work I and my fellow Paraeducators perform so that we may be recognized for the integral role we play in the education of Maryland's children. In my ten years as a Paraeducator at 4 different schools in the city I have committed myself as a public servant to help meet the academic, social and holistic needs of scholars in our district. My role as Paraeducator goes far beyond the instructional support required of my position. A mentor, motivator, second parent and caretaker, therapist, crisis support, and provider of basic necessities for scholars such as food, clothing, and toiletries are some of the ways in which I have committed myself to go beyond the call of duty to serve students in our district.

This bill would be a step in the right direction towards the just compensation towards paraeducators and support personnel and recognizing the value of the work numerous different support personnel are engaged in on a daily basis. First, it would create a commission that would research the type of work and compensation levels for educational support staff in different counties across the state, and report back their findings to the legislature. In addition, the bill calls for the state to provide bonuses to education support personnel of up to \$1000.

Members of the committee, for too long the work I and my fellow education support professionals have done for Maryland's children has gone unrecognized and unappreciated. Yet without the work of the education support staff in our state's public classrooms, our public schools would not be able to provide Maryland's students with the education they need. Again, the Baltimore Teachers Union and AFT-Maryland call for a favorable report for HB 1349. Thank you.