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Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill – 831 – Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 9th, 2022
2:00pm
Position: SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill – 831 – Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus.**

Senate Bill 836 requires the Governor to include an appropriation in the Fiscal Year 2024 that is either \$500 or \$1,000 to noncertificated education support professionals (ESP). If the FY 2023 budget includes a \$500 bonus to each noncertificated education support professional, then the Governor must include a \$500 bonus the next fiscal year. As currently introduced, the Governor's FY 2023 budget does not include funding for a \$500 bonus.

School support staff are essential to the school day and are the backbone of a safe, healthy, and supportive learning and working environment that must exist in order for educators and students to succeed. As we see staggering staffing shortages across the state, it's more important than ever that more steps are taken to ensure support staff are valued, supported, and stay in our schools. For their extraordinary and essential commitment, support staff should have a fair wage and recognition for the value they bring to education.

Noncertificated ESP is not defined in the bill or current law, but it includes teacher aides, library aides, or any other aides as reported by the Maryland State Department of Education. It does not include noncertificated school personnel that do not have an educational function.

Senate Bill 836 also establishes a workgroup to study the wages of education support professionals to determine what percentage of education support professionals in the State earn a living wage and to study increasing wages to attract and retain these workers.

General fund expenditures would increase by \$14.4 million in FY 2024 to provide each noncertificated education support professionals with a \$1,000 bonus.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 831. Thank you for your kind consideration.