



February 16, 2022

Maryland Senate
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of SB 577 / HB 226: Public Schools – Self-Contained Special Education Classrooms – Use of Video Recording Devices.

Members of the Maryland Senate’s Education, Health and Environment 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 AACPS’s system. We have had many incidents of behavioral issues with my son during that time. And we have been the recipient of that dreaded midday phone call from our child’s school. There has been an incident, he is a bit banged up, can we come and please pick him up to get checked by his doctor. No parent, or special education parent, wants to be the recipient of that type of phone call.

Following my son’s behavioral incidents, copies of video and written documentation were often hard, if not impossible, to obtain from my son’s school administration and larger school system. Delays, and in some cases refusals, to share documentation and video with us raised our suspicions. And this often left us wondering, “How is our child being treated when we drop him off at school each day?” Video cameras and improved transparency around this documentation is crucial to student safety issues and improving education for students and school staff members across Maryland.

Educating special education students can be difficult and trying work. Frustrations sometimes boil over into reactions and harmful (both mental and physical) consequences for our children. Special education students statistically have higher incidence rates of being bullied, abused or mishandled during the school day by their fellow students, school staff members, teachers and school administrators. That is an unacceptable reality within today’s, modern inclusive special education models.

A better-informed education community, is an empowered and more successful education community. Harnessing that knowledge gleaned from video and data gathered by video cameras is crucial to improving student safety, reducing incidents of trauma, school system training and an invaluable resource for improving the future outcomes for all of Maryland’s special education students.

Please return a favorable report on SB 577 / HB 226 in order to provide a safer and more inclusive education environments for all special education students across the State of Maryland.

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