

SB 311

The Teacher Pay Parity Act

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

February 8, 2023

Favorable

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports SB 311 The Teacher Pay Parity Act which would bring parity between the salaries of public-school teachers and teachers at special education placements.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors.

One of the ways we work with children to obtain educational success, it through the Villa Maria School. Located in Timonium, Villa Maria School serves as a special education placement for public school students who are not succeeding in the classroom due to emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Funded with state and local dollars, our school offers a vibrant therapeutic and special education community where children can learn, grow, and heal.

There are 3,000 Maryland students who need MORE than traditional public schools can offer. They need MORE service hours, MORE behavioral interventions, MORE intensive therapies, and MORE differentiated instruction. They then come to special education placements, like our Villa Maria School, where our educators provide them with MORE. To meet the needs of these learners, our teachers attend MORE trainings, obtain MORE certifications, and prepare MORE lessons, all while being paid substantially less than our public-school colleagues.

It is estimated that a special needs placement educator works over 31 MORE days a year than the public-school educator while being paid 20-40% less than public school teachers with similar credentials and experience. We deliver MORE for some of Maryland's neediest and underrepresented students, yet we are paid LESS. This is resulting in a workforce shortage across the state. Students still need special needs placements, but we cannot compete with public school salaries and hire enough teachers.

SB 311 would correct this inequity and bring salary parity between public school teachers and teachers at special education placements.

For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 311.

Submitted By:

Dr. Amy Vaughan-Roland, Villa Maria School