

2/7/2023

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Brooke Mahoney, but my students call me Mrs. Brooke. I am 28 years old and have been a special education teacher at a non-public school in Maryland, called the Trellis School, for five years. I am the fourth grade teacher in our school and absolutely love what I do. In the pursuit of my own education, I recently completed my master's degree in special education. The students in my classroom are each so beautifully unique. They are each significantly impacted by their disabilities and require 1:1 instruction their entire school day. We are first and foremost a communication-based program. We believe that functional communication is critical to a successful life for our students. Our school days are chaotic, stressful, joyful, and heartwarming, all wrapped up into one experience. Our students deserve the best and I give them my whole self in everything I do.

I am a young married woman with ambitions to grow my own family, to own a house, and to build a financial future for myself and my family. However, I continue to find myself draining my savings frequently just to pay the bills, get gas, and groceries. My student debt payments are due to begin again this month for my bachelor's degree and my master's degree student debt payments will begin this summer. I am terrified at the upcoming reality that my finances will continue to dwindle despite my hard work, commitment to my career, and my commitment to my education. To supplement my income, like many other fellow teachers and staff members in my school, I do additional work on the weekends.

I am so incredibly passionate about helping my children grow into their potential, but am burdened with continuous financial stress and uncertainty. I am in favor of SB 311 so special education teachers like myself can continue our careers with a fair pay that is reflective of the living expenses and debts imposed on our generation. The field of special education is desperate to maintain staff that is compassionate and dedicated to children with disabilities. Current wages constantly discourage others from entering or remaining in special education careers. A massive burden will be relieved from my shoulders, personally, if I can have financial security and continue to pursue my career without doubt. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brooke Mahoney

[brooke.mahoney@trellisservices.com](mailto:brooke.mahoney@trellisservices.com)

301-928-6398