

Dylan Manning

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Dear Senate Budget and Tax Committee,

I am writing to express my support for the Senate Bill SB0311. I believe strongly that more investment is needed to attract and maintain talent in the Special Education field. I'm sure it comes as no surprise to you that the teaching field in general has been damaged heavily by the pandemic. As much as ever, schools are struggling to maintain full staffing of qualified and motivated individuals. However, this is felt doubly so for the Special Education non-public schools.

While students across all demographics suffered loss of education and regression due to the pandemic, our students with special needs will have to work extra hard to make up for time lost. The routines, skill maintenance, and socialization that they relied on from our schools were unable to replicate fully via virtual education; so their needs are as great as ever.

As our students require extra work and added attention to make up for lost time, we are dealing with the brunt of loss of staff. I have personally heard of teachers leaving for public schools offering more money, as well as otherwise qualified teachers declining to come over to non-public schools due to pay discrepancy. It is impossible for us to meet the needs of our students if we are not able to staff our school adequately with experienced teachers. We can't do this without a competitive wage.

I do not want to take anything away from the public schools, for they need teachers as much as we do. More investment should go into education in general. However, I do not think it is fair for there to be such a large discrepancy in pay between the two. In times of labor shortages, it is understandable that those with the lowest pay and fewest benefits are going to be impacted the most. At a time when our students require more attention and have greater needs, we are faced with a disproportionate scarcity of staffing.

I appreciate all of your work. Thank you for helping make Maryland one of the greatest states in the country. I write humbly, but passionately, in support of SB0311. I hope that you will take my opinion into consideration and help us meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable students in the education system.

Sincerely,

Dylan Manning

Special Educator

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