

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1234

Workgroup to Study the Wages of Education Support Professionals

Ways and Means Committee

March 14, 2023

1:00pm

Good afternoon Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Keysha Goodwin, I am a ParaEducator of 18 yrs for BCPSS on external assignment as part of the Baltimore Teachers Union Paraprofessional and School Related Personnel Member Engagement Team (BTU PSRP Member Engagement Team). Today, I am testifying to provide insight on the hardship I face due to inadequate wages I receive for my skills and hard work. I was compelled to participate in this hearing because I want everyone that has a vote to understand why this bill is necessary.

Like many of my colleagues, I have done the right things: graduated from high school, obtained an undergraduate degree, and even went to graduate school. Next, I decided to work for a system that prepared me to have the education that would allow me to earn a living wage, the public school system. Unfortunately, public school systems in Maryland do not pay their educational support professionals a living wage.

As a PRSP, I work a full school day, an after school program, and a side hustle to make ends meet. This leaves me with little to no energy or time to fully participate in family, friends, and community functions. I desire to travel, to contribute financially to family and friends weddings, to donate to my community, and even donate to political campaigns but I cannot. I have a child in college. I need my son to be able to only focus on academics-extracurricular activities-volunteering-networking- internships while in college but he cannot. Instead he has to worry about whether he should work a part time job because I cannot afford to fully support his college education. Is it fair that he has to have a school loan, bill balance, and still worry about taking on part time work because my career as a PSRP doest afford me a basic living wage?

After 18 years, I still have a passion for working with children. Yet, this passion and the high demands of my professional field of choice has left me to live in a mixed but mostly low socioeconomic status community. Am I not worthy of the American Dream? I am asking you to vote in favor of HB 1234. Thank you for bringing this bill to the committee floor.

Sincerely,

Keysha Goodwin

BTU PSRP Member Engagement

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