

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee - Teacher Degree Apprenticeship HB0116
January 31, 2024
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***House Bill 116, Teacher Degree Apprenticeship, aligns with Free State PTA's legislative priority for expanding the Maryland teacher career and technical educational program coupled with tuition assistance.***

Free State PTA supports HB0116 Teacher Degree Apprenticeship and urges a favorable report by the committee. This bill, if passed would create a Teacher Apprenticeship Startup Grant Program under the Maryland Department of Labor in coordination with the Career Technology Education Committee . MEC believes the Teacher Apprentice Program is one of several ways being considered by the General Assembly during the 2024 session to address the teacher staffing shortages throughout Maryland Public School systems by recruiting future educators within their high schools and by providing incentives that will allow them access to highly quality instruction. This would increase the pool of future educators required to meet the academic needs of our public school students.

Evidence of the staffing shortages can be found in the Maryland Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity report produced by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in 2022 and Maryland Teacher Staffing Reports consistently finds that 50-60% of all new hires prepare out of state, because Maryland Educator Preparation Programs do not produce enough teachers to fill the state's vacancies. Some school systems currently must teach large numbers of students virtually, subjects best taught with in-class instruction.

Therefore, Free State PTA supports HB0116 and urges a favorable report by the committee.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

Gerrod Tyler, President
GTyler@fspta.org