



Senate Bill 706

Nonpublic Educational Programs - Children With Disabilities - Costs of Teacher Salaries

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 2, 2022

From: Brianna January and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 706. This bill would require nonpublic schools to pay special education teachers at least equivalent to the salary of public school special education teachers, and would directly mandate counties to pay for a portion of the salary increases.

Counties oppose this funding mandate after having just been held to the ambitious requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which included many short- and long-term funding requirements for local governments. This landmark legislation embraced a whole-system concept of successful schools and priority-setting, establishing Maryland's priorities for educational reform. Notably, teacher and school staff pay and benefits were aspects of the Blueprint that the legislature already settled, as was the substantially enhanced funding deemed necessary for special education programs. Compelling additional local spending for education, after having just approved significant funding requirements under Blueprint, would be unfair and unreasonable.

Counties are funding and supporting the Blueprint at the local level to ensure its successful implementation. Should SB 706 become law, counties would be forced to redirect funding to private institutions at a time when taxpayer money should be directed to implementation of the Blueprint's many educational reforms. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 706 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.