



House Bill 479

Education - Salaries of Noncertificated Public School Employees - Minimum Living Salaries

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Ways & Means Committee

Date: February 14, 2019

From: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 479. This bill would mandate a prescriptive compensation model for noncertificated public school employees. Counties are concerned this legislation places a substantial administrative and cost burden onto local boards of education, whose operations are supported by county funding. Without state resources to offset these large costs, the bill represents an unfunded mandate on local governments.

Local school boards must consider a host of factors when determining employee compensation, such as state and local fiscal capacity, experience, and labor market conditions. HB 479 would dramatically expand the state's role in local fiscal policy, and thus represents an unwarranted intrusion into local autonomy.

As a rule, MACo resists state policies that result in costly or burdensome local implementation. HB 479 would severely restrict the state and local ability to keep pace with education needs and to provide safe and healthy learning environments for Maryland's schoolchildren. If the required compensation is mandated at above-market levels with limited resources, the only outcome will be the curtailing of services offered. HB 479 would result in school systems reducing their ability to adequately staff and maintain their own school buildings.

Under state law, counties have no choice but to fund these costs – competing for limited local funds against education, public safety, roadway maintenance, and other essential public services.

This bill would place a costly mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy, which would ultimately sacrifice service delivery for specific employee compensation. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 479.