



**Maryland's Voice
for Nonpublic
Education**

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HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

MARCH 7, 2016

HB 453 - MARYLAND EDUCATION CREDIT

HB 1343 - MARYLAND EDUCATION CREDIT

**HB 1213 - BROADENING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS & TEACHERS
SUPPORT**

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 35 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education network. The members of our network include the Catholic, Christian, Jewish, Lutheran, Evangelical, Episcopal, Montessori, Friends, Seventh Day Adventist, Muslim, and Independent school communities. This testimony in support of the Maryland Education Credit bill is presented on behalf of the 120,000 nonpublic school students that are a part of our network.

Nonpublic school students come from taxpaying families who receive an absolute minimum benefit from the state to defray education costs. Those who attend a nonpublic school that is eligible to participate in the nonpublic school textbook program and aging school construction program are able to receive - on average - a per pupil allocation of \$100-\$145 per year.

While these funds are indeed cherished by the entire nonpublic school community and we have the utmost appreciation that we are able to utilize that benefit, our families and our school are still struggling mightily to cover the costs to provide and suitable and appropriate education. Our great state of Maryland has been a model to many states with their education standards and achievements, yet is woefully behind all of our neighboring and regional states in comparison to their partnerships with their nonpublic schools.

We understand that choosing nonpublic education for our children is a sacrifice we imposed on ourselves and as such must shoulder the burden. However, the desire to educate our youth in a climate of faith or culture that is conducive and even imperative for the growth and development of our children - is what pushes us to follow this path, despite the great challenges.

But we must ask you to please consider providing us with some additional assistance to help us defray the cost that only crushing tuition burdens currently cover.

Today's bill hearing is for three different bills. Two of them, HB453 and HB 1343, are the Maryland Education Credit. As before, this bill would enact a program that would allow Maryland businesses to receive a 60% tax credit when they contribute to student assistance organizations. In both HB 453 and HB 1343, sixty percent of those funds will go organizations that provide scholarships to nonpublic schools students and provides them with preference to the lower income families.

The remaining forty percent in HB 453 is directed to assisting public school students for tutoring, supplies, and additional books and transportation fees, otherwise not covered by the school system. In HB 1343, the remaining forty percent would go to fund innovative programs and curriculum enhancement in public schools.

The third bill, HB 1213, Broadening Opportunities for Students & Teachers is a new proposal that exclusively targets the lowest income students via and statewide application process and provides them with scholarships. This program is modeled after the Invest Maryland Tax Credit where the state puts the tax credits up for bid among large corporations, thus funding the initiative and enabling a mechanism that will provide scholarships to what we hope can be ALL students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Meals (FARMS) thus providing them with great educational opportunities and increased chances of success in the future.

Thank you for considering a favorable report for HB 453, HB 1213, HB 1343.