



*The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) is dedicated to raising the academic achievement of students in Maryland public schools by promoting adequate funding and systemic accountability for improving results.*

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## **HOUSE BILL 1433 - Education – Prekindergarten Students – Funding Ways and Means Committee - 3/7/2016-1:00 p.m.**

Members of the Committee

My name is Rick Tyler and I am speaking in support of HB 1433 as a grandfather, and former educator, who also happens to be the father, husband, son, brother and nephew of educators. I am also a product of what is now known as Head Start, having enrolled in a pilot program in a large, New York City housing project in the early 1960s. Therefore, one may say I have first-hand experience with the benefits of providing adequate, equitable access to public full-day Pre-Kindergarten programs to all eligible students.

I have a 4-year old granddaughter in a Prince George's ½ day Pre-K program with a 100 students, but she desires and her educators agrees, she and her fellow classmates need more time in school and is capable of much more. However, there is insufficient funding for her school and the thousands of other eligible students who could benefit greatly from being enrolled in a structured, public Pre-K program in their community. This especially applies to the many families that are unable to arrange transportation or day care for a ½ day program.

The General Assembly using its wisdom approved the Bridge for Excellence Act of 2002 to fund our schools adequately and equitably, so that all public school children would have access to a quality education that would allow them to compete with their peers across the state, nation and world and graduate for high school college or career ready. However, it lacks full funding formulas for Pre-K students and programs.

A growing wealth of research shows that students who began their academic career in structured pre-k programs, will be better prepared to successfully complete a K-12 education and go on to a college and career. Today, that often means not only taking advance courses in public school, but least a Master's Degree or the equivalent in certain career paths. In order to meet these goals students must start earlier.

Nowhere is this more critical than with those students from economically disadvantaged households, and minorities often from communities with limited other resources to support their needs. More recently, it has become increasingly difficult for more stable, middle-class families to provide our youngest students access to quality academic and developmental services consistent with their needs at their age. In the Washington Area, it was recently reported that it may cost as much as \$20,000 or more per year for quality day care and it did not define whether structure academic programs with oversight was always provided.

According to some data, there are between 30-35,000 Pre-k students enrolled in Maryland, but significant evidence shows that more households with students this age are in need or desire such an opportunity, especially if it is a full day program. HB 1466 is one step toward meeting this goal.

Besides, there is an economic benefit for the state and the communities they live in, because if the program is all day, their parents will be able to work, they will be able to learn and develop all day in a supervised environment with trained educators and go on to be more successful and positive people.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report for House Bill 1433.