



everychild.onevoice.®

5 Central Avenue
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
Phone: (410) 760-6221
(800) 707-7972
Fax: (410) 760-6344
www.mdpta.org
info@mdpta.org

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House of Delegates
Appropriations Committee
Build to Learn Act of 2020 (HB 1)**

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SUPPORT

Maryland PTA is the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For nearly 105 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1 - Build to Learn Act of 2020 ("HB 1"). In short, the bill would:

- Authorize the Maryland Stadium Authority to contract for, manage, and oversee certain public school facility projects
- Authorize Prince George's County government and Board of Education to enter into a certain public-private partnership to enhance the delivery of public school construction projects in the county
- Require the Governor, beginning in fiscal year 2020, to include in the annual budget certain supplemental funding to be used for educational purposes

Every jurisdiction in the state would benefit from HB 1, and Maryland PTA believes this bill helps address concerns pertaining to environmental concerns and school safety. Maryland PTA believes that HB 1 affirms that adequate school facilities are not only crucial to the success of Maryland public schools, but they are also a reflection of and resource for the population in which they are located. The essence of HB 1 prioritizes the idea of reasonable investments in safe, well-equipped, and sufficiently maintained facilities.

Maryland's children have been going to schools with inadequate facilities for far too long. School systems have not been able to keep up with aging infrastructure and growing student populations. Local funds have not been able to keep up with these growing building problems. The Built to Learn Act, if properly administered, will help thousands of kids learn in a welcoming, safe, healthy, and comfortable environment.

Aging facilities have a myriad of issues including but not limited to old HVAC systems, and mold and moisture issues that are dangerous for children and teachers with allergies, asthma, and respiratory conditions. Plumbing and roofing issues exacerbate mold and moisture issues inside older schools. Many public schools currently have 10 or more portable classrooms, which take over soccer fields or blacktop areas where kids would normally play. Some counties have millions of dollars in backlogged, maintenance and construction projects. Our public schools need the \$2.2 billion infusion that HB 1 would provide to help relieve school overcrowding and fix deteriorating facilities.

It is our understanding that this bill will follow the current Interagency Commission on School Construction formulas requiring different matching requirements, and increase the Capital Grant Program for Local School Systems with Significant Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Classrooms ("EGRC") to \$80 million a year. This will help high-growth counties, while lowering the requirements for the money, which means school construction dollars will be spread to more districts. The matching requirements should take into account the current economic conditions, so that all local school systems will be able to take advantage of the full allocation of the bond sale proceeds.

We are also concerned that the Prince George's County Public-Private Partnership Fund might unintentionally result in inequities among local school systems. All local school systems should be authorized to establish similar public-private partnerships, and regulations should be established to protect public property and rights regarding facilities constructed with private funds.

Overall, Maryland PTA strongly supports HB 1. To build a world-class school system, we need 21st century classrooms, and HB 1 is a giant leap toward that goal.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Edna Harvin Battle
President