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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 276 – Building Opportunity Act of 2020

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee February 19, 2020

Testimony By: Mathew Palmer, Deputy Legislative Officer

Senate Bill 276 – Building Opportunity Act of 2020 will provide for a historic investment in public school construction projects across the State. Education has always been the administration's top priority and this legislation represents the largest investment in public school construction ever in Maryland's history. The administration believes very strongly that every child deserves access to a world-class education regardless of what neighborhood they grow up in, and an important part of ensuring that is to provide students with facilities that are modern, safe, and efficient that encourage growth and learning.

This legislation would allow the State to address almost all of the annual funding requests from local school systems over the next five years. These requests from the local school systems range from \$600 million to \$900 million annually, and this backlog can only be addressed with a targeted and bold infusion of capital funds.

This legislation would not only meet the important need for public school construction funding, but would also spur economic and job growth across the State. The new construction projects are estimated to create more than 27,000 new jobs, \$1.2 million in new wages, and \$81.2 million in state and local tax revenue.

We ask this committee to support this extremely important piece of legislation to provide world class education facilities for our children, and to pass SB 276 so that we address this pressing need this year. The children of Maryland cannot wait and they deserve safe, modern, and efficient facilities in which to learn.