

SB0385: Education - Funding for General education Programs - Definition Alterations

Favorable

Testimony as submitted by:

Josh Bokee

Frederick County, Maryland resident

jbokee@gmail.com

The Hon. Chair, Senator Guy Guzzone

The Hon. Vice-Chair, Senator Rosapepe

Members of the Committee

My name is Josh Bokee, and I am a parent with a student in Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS). I respectfully recommend to the committee a **Favorable** vote on SB 0385.

The existing State aid formula for funding local public schools does not adequately account for situations in which a jurisdiction experiences rapid student enrollment. SB 0385 would make an adjustment to the funding formula so that there is not a gap between when large numbers of new students arrive in the school system and State aid is applied.

While Frederick County is currently experiencing the most significant student enrollment growth of all of Maryland's jurisdictions (9.8%), it is not the only one doing so, as others include Anne Arundel (1.4%), Charles (1.8%) and Carroll (2.4%) counties.

When the funding formula does not adequately reflect the actual numbers of students who are attending local schools, it creates ripple effects throughout the system. While the most obvious impacts are larger class sizes, it also means less time for school staff such as behavioral specialists and math and reading specialists to spend time with students in need.

As a parent, I believe that we are all in this together - the needs of students across the state are all vitally important. I commend the State, the General Assembly and members of the committee for your continued commitment to public education throughout the years.

Student enrollment growth shifts across the region, and while today it is Frederick and Anne Arundel that are rapidly increasing, tomorrow it will likely be other Maryland jurisdictions that will undergo similar demographic shifts. Funding is not unlimited; however, SB0385 would help make precise, needed adjustments to help ensure that every student who enters the school system is adequately funded so they can be ready to learn and can expect success.

I thank the sponsor, Senator Karen Lewis-Young and co-sponsors Senator Katie Fry-Hester and Senator Dawn Gile for introducing SB 0385 and respectfully recommend a favorable vote by the committee. Thank you.

