

**Testimony of James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr. in Support of House Bill 1300 and
Senate Bill 1000
The Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

**Senate Budget and Tax, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committees House
Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees
February 17th, 2020**

I respectfully submit this statement to express my strong support for House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000, the Blueprint for Maryland's future, which jointly propose to create a world class pre-kindergarten through 12 public school system in Maryland.

Throughout my career I have actively supported efforts to strengthen educational achievement for all students. As Chairman and CEO of WGL Holdings, Inc. and its subsidiary Washington Gas Light Company for 11 years until my retirement in 2008 I included education issues among the company's top priorities for civic engagement and charitable support. Personally, I served as president of the Maryland State Board of Education between 2006 and 2010 and completed my 8 years of service on the Maryland State Board of Education in 2014. Currently, I am a member of the advisory board for Bard Baltimore, a public contract school offering Baltimore City students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and an associates degree in four years. I have also served for many years as a member of The Walters Art Museum Board of Trustees where I currently serve as President of the Board. The Walters engages with public school teachers and students in many ways to enhance educational enrichment as part of its core mission.

The Blueprint for Maryland's future offers a realistic opportunity to provide the resources, focus and accountability for results necessary for all public school students to become capable of competing with anyone in the world. Resources will be focused on supporting professionalism and effectiveness of teachers and administrators in helping students achieve in meaningful, measurable ways. Based on this transformational Blueprint our students will have real career choices and be prepared to succeed in their chosen pursuits.

In order for Maryland to sustain a position of leadership in terms of economic success as well as quality of life for all who live here it is essential to pass and fund the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Accordingly, I urge the committees to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000.

Respectfully submitted,

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