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Testimony 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
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Thank you for this opportunity to lend my strong support to House Bill 1300/Senate Bill 1000, “the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future,” that proposes the creation of a world-class pre-K-12 public school system in Maryland.

In the way of background, I am retired chairman and CEO of the Lockheed Martin Corporation, former Under Secretary of the United States Army, founder of the Maryland Business Roundtable for (pre-K-12) Education, and a 35-year resident of our State.

About a decade ago I was asked to chair a committee established by the U.S. Congress to assess America’s global competitiveness. The Committee’s report, commonly referred to as the Gathering Storm report, offered two principal recommendations: fix the nation’s ailing pre-K-12 education system and increase funding of basic research. When chairing a similar committee for our State, we arrived at much the same conclusion regarding the importance of pre-K-12 education. It was also my privilege to serve on another bipartisan committee mandated by the U.S. Congress with the assignment to examine the nation’s future defense needs. It concluded that the greatest danger to America’s national security, other than the outbreak of nuclear war, would be the failure to fix our pre-K-12 education system. Based on these experiences and others like them, I have become convinced that there is no higher priority for our nation or our State than to strengthen our public-school systems.

The logic is straightforward. Surveys throughout the world indicate that when asked, “What is the most important factor in your wellbeing?”, by far the most prevalent answer is “to have a good job.” My own studies show that to add one straightforward percentage point to the numbers of jobs requires growing the GDP by about 1.7 percent. And growing the GDP requires four closely related and essential factors: a capable workforce, creation of knowledge, an innovation-friendly ecosystem, and financial capital. Simply stated, a qualified workforce is foundational to our success as a nation and as a State—and a qualified workforce depends on the availability of a quality education for all—in academic endeavors or in the trades or both.

Having spent much of the last 25 years studying the connection of the quality of life of a citizenry with the quality of education, were I to propose just five recommendations to your committees, they would be precisely the five stated in the “Blueprint for the Future.” That is why I urge your support of House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000.

