

Testimony of Christina Olson, Carroll County resident and parent.

Good Afternoon, my name is Christina Olson. I am a Carroll County resident and the mom of 3rd grade twin boys who has faced many challenges in due to the state mandated shut-down of our public schools. I am writing to submit my formal support for HB 266, the "Student Education Equity and Funding Act". My support for HB 266 is quite simple. Our number one responsibility is to provide opportunity and growth to our children. Many Maryland families rely heavily on the public school system to support their children's development. The long-term school closures have forced Maryland families to make heartbreaking decisions between feeding and housing their family or educating their children. These are decisions that no family should have to face and certainly no child should have to suffer from. HB 266, while not nearly enough, will allow families to take back control of the future for their children and provide them the opportunities that are promised to all public school children. The education gap within our Maryland school system was overwhelming prior to the COVID-19 school closures and consequently, many children will never be able to overcome the increased inequality. All children deserve an education, all children deserve opportunity, all children deserve to grow up in a country where they are taught "you can be anything you want to be" but each day that passes children will lose more and more of their dreams. Not only will our current public-school children not be able to compete with their private or home school peers but longer term, they will not be able to compete with their peers in the job market. We must do more for our children, we must allow families to provide what's best for their children, we MUST preserve the education of our future leaders. HB 266 is a small act to show that our country and our elected officials care about the next generation and are working to make sure that they have every opportunity possible to be their best in life. I encourage each of you reading this, many who are blessed to be able to provide an education for their children, to consider the children that don't have those opportunities and the positive impact the funding in HB 266 could have on them for the rest of their lives.