

February 14, 2021

Robert Strebeck
3829 Clarks Point Rd
Middle River MD 21220

Delegate Anne R. Kaiser
Room 131
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SUPPORT HB 0939

Madam Chairwoman,

Thank you for your service and for the opportunity to submit my written testimony in support of HB 0939.

I am writing as the grandparent of three children. Two attend public schools and one attends a catholic school.

Throughout this COVID19 pandemic I have personally witnessed the disparity in the academic programs and the progress of the two grandchildren in public schools versus the one in the catholic school system.

While my grandchildren in public schools have been home the entire time, the one in catholic school has been in the classroom about 90 to 95 percent of the time with short periods of virtual learning. Students and educators alike wear masks and practice social distancing while in school in compliance with state guidelines.

Over the course of the public school lockdown and transition to virtual learning, the public school system has been plagued with outages, equipment issues, staffing issues, truncated curriculum and lack of continuity in the education of the students. Additionally, the two grandchildren in public schools have had a marked decrease in their grades and command of the subject material.

While both public and private schools have been forced to cancel sports and extracurricular activities the marked difference is in the quality of the academic learning opportunity.

The public school teachers do their very best to manage the online learning environment, but have little or no opportunity to assist a student who is falling behind or one that has comprehension challenges. Online etiquette and discipline are very difficult to maintain leading to a large amount of non-productive time.

I live in district 7 (Middle River) but my grandchildren live in district 6 (Dundalk).

My granddaughter is in the magnet program at Patapsco High School and has not been able to engage in her primary curriculum (dance and performance arts) due to COVID 19 restrictions.

My Grandson attended Dundalk Middle School and is having a very difficult time with virtual learning. His grades have dropped and he feels isolated and alone.

I find the fact that public school classrooms remain empty; while those same educators go to Walmart, local restaurants, hair salons, fast food establishments, gas stations, doctors, dentists, pharmacies, banks and other public places where they practice social distancing and wear a mask in accordance with state regulations; to be quite puzzling.

Sincerely,
Robert Strebeck