



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT: HB68: Interagency Commission on School Construction – Systemic Renovation Projects - Eligibility**

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the Committee,

As you know, in Howard County, we have worked closely with the Howard County Public School System and Board of Education to prioritize education and school construction funding to make us one of the nation's leading school systems. I am proud to express my support for this legislation, which would enable funding from the Built to Learn Act of 2020 to apply to all school capital projects, regardless of their cost.

Prior to the introduction of HB 68, I wrote to the Interagency Commission on School Construction on September 2, 2021 requesting consideration for this effort. Built to Learn will invest \$2.2B for school construction projects across the state and the intent of this legislation was to be applicable to *any* project. We have concerns that limiting projects to a minimum of \$4 million will lead to inequity in completing necessary systemic renovations across the Howard County, which is critical to creating the very best teaching and learning environment for all educators and students.

We appreciate the IAC for the significant funding provided for our county priorities to advance the New High School #13, Talbott Springs Elementary replacement and the renovation of Hammond High School. I have focused on renovation and continued investment in our older schools, as well as the construction of new ones to help alleviate school overcrowding. In addition to these larger ticket items, we have dozens of projects that require attention, from HVAC replacements, to necessary ADA compliance upgrades to support our educators, learners, and families with disabilities.

On average, in recent years, we have allocated nearly \$60 million in County funding each year to support school our construction efforts. The \$118 million that Howard County will receive over the next 10 years from the Built to Learn Act is critical, and we need the flexibility to fund many projects valued at less than \$4 million.

I would like to express my appreciation for Delegate Watson and her leadership on this effort as well as your consistent advocacy as Chair of this committee and ensuring critical funding for school construction across the state over the next decade.

It is imperative that we keep up with the demands of providing an adequate environment that is conducive to the learning and development of our students which is why equitable investment in school infrastructure is critical. I urge the committee have a favorable report on HB 68.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive