

## Written Testimony of Thomas P. and Tina M. Wilson

### RE: In Support of House Bill HB0569 - Primary and Secondary Education - Education Savings Account Program - Established (Maryland Universal School Choice Act)

March 3, 2023

As citizens of the state of Maryland, we enthusiastically support Maryland **House Bill HB0569**. This testimony seeks to express our rationale for support of **HB0569**.

School choice allows public education funds to follow students to the schools or services that best fit their needs —whether that’s to a public school, private school, charter school, home school or any other learning environment families choose. According to EdChoice.org, there are over “76 educational choice programs on the books in 32 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico”, and that number continues to grow. Maryland, once known for its exceptional school system, no longer holds any distinction for its public education system. This even though the system has consistently received increased funding. For Maryland to remain competitive with its neighboring states and be able to attract residents to the state, School Choice is becoming increasingly necessary.

The benefit to students appears to be clear. According to EdChoice.org, “*based upon test scores using random assignment studies—the gold-standard method in social science—school choice programs help improve students’ academic performance, especially over time*”. Most studies also find that school choice drives competition among schools, and public schools respond well to that pressure. Students who remain in public schools see improvement as well. According to EdChoice.org, “*test scores aren’t the only measure of a successful education—in public schools or private schools. Children excel in different areas and learn at different paces. School choice is about opening more opportunities for kids, and parents, to find the right fit for their learning needs.*”

The education disruption brought on by COVID, and the insidious inclusion of Critical Race Theory and sexual indoctrination material into school curriculum, has energized parents and taxpayers alike. They are demanding more options beyond an assigned district school, embracing innovative learning models, and loosening the government grip on education. As Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman envisioned, a choice-based system of education weakens the government monopoly on schooling and sparks innovation and competition to ultimately “change the character of education.”

We strongly support this legislation and believe it absolutely necessary to reinvigorate a declining public school system in Maryland.

Respectfully,

Thomas P. and Tina M. Wilson  
Long-time residents of MD District 17