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MAJORITY WHIP

Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Oral Testimony of Jazz Lewis
HB458– Public School Construction – Grant Programs, Approvals, and
Administration – Alterations
Before the Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair Guzzone and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am here to present House Bill 458 the House crossfile of Senate Bill 360.

To start, this bill will bring the Interagency Commission on School Construction out of the Department of Education and will make it an independent unit of state government. This reflects the intent of the Built to Learn Act but wasn't included in statute. This move will help us streamline the Commission's work. Both the House and Senate bills also offer a number of technical changes to help in the Commission's work.

The House bill does have a number of amendments currently not included in the Senate version of the bill. These particularly relate to Prince George's County's P3 agreement on school construction. These amendments clarify that any debt associated with the P3 agreement is owed by the School Board, limiting any impacts this debt might have on the County's bonding authority. The House bill also raises the state's yearly contribution to the Prince George's County Public-Private Partnership Fund from \$25 million to \$27 million. These amendments also shift the evaluation of using alternative energy systems in schools from being conducted by the Commission and the Maryland Stadium Authority to the local jurisdiction's Board of Education. There are also a number of technical changes included within these amendments.

This bill, alongside the accompanying amendments from the House will help us streamline and improve our state's process for school construction.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report.