

Budget and Taxation Committee

March 7, 2023

SB 646 - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee,

Thank you for opportunity to share with you my **favorable position on SB 646**, which would provide for the establishment of a fund for charter school facilities in Maryland. I am writing to you today as a former Treasurer and Board Member at Chesapeake Charter School Alliance, which is the governing board of Chesapeake Public Charter School (CPCS) in Lexington Park, St. Mary's County.

Right now, charter schools are spending their PPA Blueprint Dollars and/or fundraising to pay for facilities costs. There is no additional funding for public charter schools, and as a result, there is less PPA funding being spent on actual education in charter schools. LEAs have access to PPA Blueprint Dollars, their District General Fund, and Capital Funding to pay for operations, maintenance, and other facilities related expenses. This is a significant equity issue in public school facilities funding.

This bill would allow for the opportunity for public charter school students, teachers, families, and staff to have the same facility experience as their traditional peers who are attending 21st Century Schools, updated buildings, and state of the art learning environments. It is incredibly unfair that they are left out of feeling safe, secure, and supported while at school and work due to a lack of funding to public charter schools for facilities.

The funding for this program would come from the State's General Fund. It does not take money from the LEA capital funding or per pupil funding allocated for LEAs. It has a fiscal note of approximately \$48 million annually if every school maxed out their possible reimbursement.

This year we celebrate 20 years of the charter school law in Maryland. It is about time we get to work funding public charter school facilities. I can tell you as former treasurer, this bill would prevent a possible precarious financial position for CPCS in the future. It is a struggle have to take money out of school operations to pay for facility costs. I hope you will support SB0646, School Construction - Public Charter School Facility Fund - Establishment. Our charter school community thanks you!

Sincerely,

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