

Dear Delegate Young,

My name is Linda Colegrove, and I am writing to you today as the grandparent of a child enrolled in a St. Mary's County Charter School to ask you to continue your support of HB1061 [School Construction - Public Charter School Facility Fund - Establishment](#).

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, this bill will be before your committee on March 5th. Maryland public charter schools are an integral part of the public school portfolio in Maryland, serving more than 24,000 students statewide. The communities with public charter schools, the teachers and staff that work there, the districts that include them, and the students that attend them would all benefit directly from the funding HB1061 would supply. Parents who send their children to Charter Schools truly care about their children's education.

Local educational agencies utilize capital funding and general funds from sources not available to public charter schools to support their facilities, operations, and maintenance. HB1061 seeks to establish a fund managed by the Interagency Commission that allows public charter schools to apply for up to \$2000 per pupil annually for eligible facilities-related expenses. This funding does not impact the Blueprint formula or take funding away from other public school students, as the funding would come from the State's General Fund. Instead, HB1061 will allow more Blueprint dollars to be spent IN the classroom on learning instead of ON the school's facility. It also sets strong parameters around spending accountability and transparency while ensuring there is standard bond bill language on repayment if a school should close or sell a privately-owned building.

Charter school students are public school students, and they deserve to be educated in safe, welcoming, adequate school buildings just like their traditional public school peers. This funding will help keep public schooling a choice for many Marylanders to help provide the well-rounded student body that represents the best of Maryland's upcoming future thought leaders.

We have had more than 20 years of public charter schools in Maryland; the charter school community across the state consists of more than 24,000 families and 53 schools in eight districts. It is time to equitably fund the capital improvements for these public school facilities. We look forward to the hearing on March 5th and your support of HB1061, School Construction - Public Charter School Facility Fund - Establishment.

Thank you,

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