

DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF KENT COUNTY

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair
House Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HB 736 - School Construction - Local Cost-Share - Alterations

Position: Support

The Democratic Club of Kent County asks the House Appropriations Committee to report FAVORABLY on HB 736. We write not as representatives of a partisan political group, but as citizens of Kent County. This bill matters to all of us, regardless of party – it will enable us to build a new middle school here, which we desperately need.

Kent County has only one middle school, and the building has been serving our children since 1950. To be blunt, it is falling apart, despite the best efforts of the Kent County Public Schools to keep it up and running. Just in the past months the building has had to shut down several times due to plumbing issues. The roof leaks when it rains, and that has been getting worse for several years now. As a retired school mental health professional, I can attest to the adverse impact that such conditions can have on student achievement. Our kids deserve better.

It is also essential to point out the unique needs of the Kent County Public Schools – we are the smallest school district, in the smallest county in the state. Our student poverty rate is such that all students at all five of our schools qualify for free breakfast and lunch. In short, we just cannot afford a new school without your help.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 736, and for your support of our students. If we can be of any further assistance as the Appropriations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@dckcmd.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Flook, Ph.D.
President, Democratic Club of Kent County