

HB053: Education – Task Force on Education Funding and Population Growth

Favorable

Testimony as submitted by:

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The Hon. Chair, Delegate Barnes

The Hon. Vice-Chair, Delegate Chang

Members of the Committee

My name is Josh Bokee, and I am a parent with a student in Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS). I respectfully recommend to the committee a **Favorable** vote on HB 053 – Task Force on Education Funding and Population Growth as introduced by delegate Kris Fair.

The existing State aid formula for funding local public schools does not adequately account for situations in which a jurisdiction experiences rapid student enrollment. Recognizing the complexity of the issue, HB 053 would create a Task Force to study, review and make valuable recommendations to help remedy the current situation.

Currently, in Frederick County, there is a gap between when large numbers of new students arrive in the school system at the beginning of the year and when State aid to match the student increase is applied.

While Frederick County is experiencing the most significant student enrollment growth of all of Maryland's jurisdictions it is not the only one doing so, as others including Carroll, Anne Arundel and Charles counties.

When the funding formula does not adequately reflect the actual numbers of students who are attending local schools, it creates ripple effects throughout the system. While the most obvious impacts are larger class sizes, it also means less time for school staff such as behavioral specialists and math and reading specialists to spend time with students in need of those services. As a parent, I believe that we are all in this together across Maryland.

I commend the State, the General Assembly and members of the committee for your continued commitment and investment to public education.

Funding is not unlimited which is why HB053 is needed now so that the issue can be thoughtfully studied, and recommendations can be put forward.

I thank the sponsors for the bill's introduction and respectfully recommend a favorable vote by the committee. Thank you.