

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
The Honorable Mark S. Chang  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Support for HB0736 School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of House Bill 0736, School Construction - Local Cost-Share - Alterations.

I am a Navy Veteran, parent, and business owner in Kent County. **I believe this bill is essential for the health and well-being of the staff, teachers, and students in our county and well as being indispensable to the economic health of the county.** This bill would make it possible for our community to build the new middle school that we desperately need. Currently, the state would split the costs for a new school 50-50 with the county. With construction costs budgeted between \$60 and \$70 million, that is a pricetag our Kent County community of less than 20,000 residents absolutely cannot afford.

The state set the 50/50 split because a formula shows Kent County to be very wealthy, but **all five of our schools (that's right, we have only FIVE schools in the entire county and each of them) have high rates of poverty.** Every student in each of our schools gets free breakfast and lunch because of our poverty rates.

We have one middle school — Kent County Middle School (KCMS) — serving all the children of our county. **I turn 55 this month and this school opened in 1950, TWENTY YEARS BEFORE I WAS BORN!!!**

The maintenance costs we are paying every year is money that would be much better spent on a new building. **The building had to be shut down and classes canceled for three days this school year for plumbing issues.** When it rains, water leaks into the halls and classrooms. One room is freezing cold and the adjacent room over is boiling hot. Kent County Middle School's classrooms do not meet the needs of our students. They are not suitable by any standard of education.

Our kids, teachers, staff, and community deserve better. PLEASE HELP by supporting HB0736! **A new Kent County Middle School will help revive our school system and our local economy.**

Thank you,  
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