

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

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

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

Position: Support

As a private citizen, I am asking the House Appropriations Committee to report FAVORABLY on HB 736. I am writing as a citizen of Kent County who does not have any school-age children. This bill matters to all county residents – 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 the husband of a retired public-school teacher, I can attest to the adverse impact on student achievement 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 my comments on HB 736, and for your support of our students.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Herb