

SB062: Education – Task Force on Education Funding and Population Growth

Favorable

Testimony as submitted by:

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The Hon. Chair, Senator Guy Guzzone

The Hon. Vice-Chair, Senator Rosapepe

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 SB 062 – Task Force on Education Funding and Population Growth.

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, SB 062 would create a Task Force to comprised of the needed stakeholders to study, review and make valuable recommendations going forward.

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 actually applied.

While Frederick County is currently 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 are also growing.

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.

As a parent, I believe that we are all in this together - the needs of students across the state are all vitally important. I commend the State, the General Assembly and members of the committee for your continued commitment and investment to public education throughout the years.

Funding is not unlimited which is why SB062 is needed now so that the issue can be thoughtfully studied, and recommendations can be put forward.

I thank the sponsors, Senator Karen Lewis-Young and Senator Justin Ready for introducing SB 062 and respectfully recommend a favorable vote by the committee. Thank you.