

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0843 School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

Hello. I am Alden Swanson, from Chestertown, Maryland and I am a 16-year-old junior who has gone to Kent County public schools my entire life. Kent County is one of the smallest and most rural counties in Maryland, and we only have one middle school. When I went to that school, I thought that the creaky ceilings, mold infestations, and leaking sinks were normal. I thought that not having any windows in some of my classrooms was how it was everywhere, and so did everyone at my school. We accepted and dealt with our frankly disgusting environment because it was all we knew.

I began to realize that this wasn't normal when I started going to other schools for band competitions in high school. I was in awe of the state-of-the-art buildings that kids got to learn in every day—the big windows, the tall ceilings, the vast libraries. They looked completely different from anything I'd ever imagined a school to look like, and I couldn't help but think, "Why can't we have this?"

Kent County may be small, but we deserve a comfortable, functional, and safe building to learn in. Imagine if you, committee members, went to work and had to dodge water dripping from the ceiling as you walked through the halls, had to steer clear of a room that had a mold infestation, and were told that you weren't allowed to use the bathroom because the pipes were clogged. This is the reality of being a student at our current middle school. My little brother has had to stay home from school multiple times this year because of issues that I've mentioned in the building. That doesn't sound like anything close to an acceptable learning environment to me.

If you are truly dedicated to the education of the children of Maryland, I ask you to support a positive recommendation for this bill so my little brother and all of the Kent County Middle School students can learn in a safe and welcoming environment.

Thank you,
Alden Swanson
Chestertown, MD