

Chairperson Feldman, Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 819, which expands open enrollment and gives Maryland families access to more public school options, including online schools. My name is Tynisa Williams, and I am a math teacher in Baltimore at Baltimore Revolutionary Academy for Virtual Education. I have seen firsthand the incredible impact that educational choice can have on students, as an educator and as a learning coach for my niece, who thrived in an online public school and successfully graduated.

I have worked with students from all backgrounds—those who excel in a traditional classroom and those who need something different. The reality is that one size does not fit all when it comes to education. That's the beauty of online learning. Some students need the flexibility of an online program, whether due to health challenges, learning differences, bullying, or simply because they learn best in a more personalized environment. The option to choose an online public school allowed my niece to focus on her education without the social pressures and distractions students face in a traditional setting. As a result, she not only graduated but graduated with high honors from P.O.R.T. Virtual Learning Program at Digital Harbor High School proving that success comes when students are in the right learning environment for them.

Families should not have to fight for access to an education that meets their child's needs. Open enrollment ensures that students can find the best fit, whether that is a brick-and-mortar school in a different district or an online public school that offers a flexible, high-quality learning experience. Education should be about students, not boundaries.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 819 and expand access to public school options so that more students can find success—just like my niece did. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Tynisa Williams

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