

I am providing written testimony to express my strong support for House Bill 583 – Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Schools – Alterations

During the shut down, my grandchildren's school went through a redistricting. When it was time to go back in-person, their school was no longer their school. School was now one they didn't know and is 4 times the distance and travel time, even without bus stops, traffic, or weather.

They decided to remain with FCPS Remote Virtual Program (RVP). The school they knew, the teachers, routine and classmates they knew.

This is the first letter my granddaughter wrote and read in front of the FCPS BoE in May:

Hi, I am Elizabeth.

I am in 4 th grade going into 5 th grade.

In RVP I have learned so many new things. I have met amazing teachers and students. This is a good learning space.

I have already gotten accepted for next school year in RVP but if you cut this school I will not be able to go to RVP next year.

I had a hard time decoding and reading words before I joined RVP. Since I have been in RVP I have improved so much, but if I go back in person I am afraid that I am not going to get all the help I need in a crowded school.

This is the only school I know because I have been working online since I was in Kindergarten. Some students in RVP can't home school and they have to go in person. Other students have special needs. For whatever their situation is they need to have this option.

All students in RVP need this school.

Please, please save RVP.

Elizabeth won't write any more letters or come to any more meetings.

Now she says "I have no school."

It wasn't school bullies or threats that taught her not to stand up for herself; it wasn't her teachers that broke their promises, that wouldn't listen to her. It was the Board of Education.

RVP is more than budgeting dollars. It's about Students that are simply trying to go to their school and do their best every day that their school is available to them. And like Elizabeth, without RVP, most of these students "have no school".

Please support HB 583 and ensure that all children in Maryland have access to a synchronous virtual education.

Thank you for your time.

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