

Parent & Taxpayer Testimony in Support of HB1430

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

House Appropriations Committee

March 11, 2026

Good afternoon Chair and members of the committee,

My name is DeWayne Ballard, and I am both a parent of a student who has been accepted to Phoenix International School of Arts in La Plata, MD and a Maryland taxpayer. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1430.

Like many parents, I want my child to have access to a school that supports their learning, growth, and future opportunities. My family chose Phoenix International School of Arts because of its unique mission and culture, its strong academic program, and its focus on the arts and STEM. We are excited about the school's commitment to nurturing creativity and critical thinking.

Although my son has not yet started at Phoenix International School of Arts, we are confident that this school will provide him with the environment and opportunities he needs to thrive. We look forward to seeing him grow academically and personally in a setting that values innovation and individual learning styles.

Public charter schools provide families with important educational opportunities and choices within the public school system. They serve thousands of Maryland students and give families access to innovative programs that meet different learning styles and needs.

But while charter schools are public schools serving public school students, they often do not receive the same facilities funding that traditional public schools receive. That means charter schools frequently have to pay for their buildings using the same funding that is meant to support classroom instruction.

As a taxpayer, I believe public education dollars should be used primarily to support students, teachers, and learning. However, without facilities funding, charter schools are sometimes forced to make difficult decisions—like whether to fix the roof or buy library books, whether to repair heating systems or invest in science equipment, or whether to maintain the building or expand student programs. Those are choices no school should have to make.

The \$1,600 per pupil facilities funding included in HB1430 would help create a more equitable and responsible funding system. It would ensure charter schools have dedicated support for maintaining their facilities so that more public education dollars can go directly toward instruction, teachers, and student learning.

This bill is about fairness. Charter school students are public school students, and they deserve the same access to safe, appropriate learning environments. As both a parent and a taxpayer, I believe this legislation represents a smart investment in Maryland's students and a step toward a more equitable public education system.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important bill.

Respectfully,
DeWayne Ballard
White Plains, MD

Parent of an accepted Phoenix International School of Arts student and Maryland taxpayer