



Testimony in Support of HB1430

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding
House Appropriations Committee
March 9, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee,

I am **Atasha James, Co-Founder and CEO of Legends Charter School in Prince George’s County**. Thank you for allowing me to support **HB1430**.

Legends Charter School was founded in **2019** and opened its doors during the global pandemic. Despite launching during one of the most challenging periods in modern education, our school has grown to serve **more than 900 students in grades K–8**.

At Legends, we provide scholars with a **rigorous, advanced liberal arts education combined with financial education**, empowering students and families with the knowledge to **open businesses, build wealth, invest, and give back to their communities**. Our mission is rooted in the belief that education should equip students not only for college and careers, but also for **economic agency and community leadership**.

Public charter schools like Legends are **public schools of choice** that families actively seek out because they align with their aspirations for their children. Yet charter schools are required to **fund their facilities out of the same operating budgets that support instruction, staffing, and student programs**.

This structural inequity places charter schools in an impossible position: We must decide whether to invest **in our students or maintain the buildings where they learn**. HB1430 helps correct this imbalance.

The bill’s \$1,600-per-pupil **facilities funding** would provide charter schools with much-needed stability and allow us to redirect resources where they belong—**in classrooms, teachers, and student supports**.

For schools like Legends, this funding would:

- Increase educational opportunities for the **Prince George’s County families who choose our school**.
- Allow us to invest more deeply in **academic programming and student support services**.

- Provide greater **long-term financial stability** so we can continue growing responsibly.
- Expand access for **more deserving Prince Georgians seeking high-quality public school options.**

The demand for public charter schools across Maryland continues to grow as families seek **innovation, rigor, and opportunity.**

It is time to accelerate change in Maryland’s public education landscape. Public charter schools are a powerful lever for demonstrating **what is possible when schools are empowered to innovate, and communities are given real choices.**

At Legends, we often say: **“A Legend is who they are, and what they will become.”** Our students deserve facilities funding that supports the environments where those futures are built.

I urge the committee to take swift action and vote in favor of HB1430, ensuring that Maryland’s public charter schools and the students they serve receive the resources they need to thrive. Thank you for your dedication to advancing opportunities for Maryland’s students.

Respectfully,
Atasha James
Co-Founder & CEO
Legends Charter School
Prince George’s County, Maryland