

## **Testimony in Support of HB1430**

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding House  
Appropriations Committee  
March 11, 2026

Good morning, Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Angela Thompson, and I am the parents of a student at Pheonix International School of the Arts (PISOTA) in La Plata, Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1430.

My family chose our charter because there are less students, a good ratio from teacher to student, has more to offer as far as academics and arts, more intimate time with students, etc. My son has excelled tremendously since starting PISOTA last year. He could not focus on the usual at the normal surrounding Public Schools. He also didn't feel safe where he was prior and feels much more comfortable where he is now.

Public charter schools provide families like mine with meaningful educational opportunities and access. They give parents the ability to choose a learning environment that truly fits their child's needs.

But while charter schools are public schools serving public school students, they often do not receive the same support for facilities that traditional public schools receive.

That means many charter schools must pay for building costs out of the same funding meant for classroom instruction.

School leaders are often forced to make difficult decisions between investing in students and maintaining the building. Sometimes the decision becomes whether to repair the roof or buy new library books, whether to upgrade heating systems or invest in science equipment, or whether to improve classrooms or pay for basic building maintenance.

This is not a choice any school should have to make.

The \$1,600 per pupil facilities funding proposed in HB1430 would help create a more equitable system. It would ensure charter schools have dedicated support for maintaining

safe, functional learning spaces so more resources can go into the classroom rather than toward the classroom building.

For families like mine, this bill is about fairness and opportunity. Charter school students deserve the same access to safe, appropriate facilities as any other public-school student in Maryland.

When schools are not focused on spending classroom dollars on building costs, they can invest more in teachers, learning materials, student programs, and academic support.

Every child deserves a school environment that supports their learning and their future.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important step toward equity for Maryland's chart school students and families.

Respectfully,

Angela B. Thompson  
White Plains, Maryland  
Parent of PISOTA student