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House Appropriations Committee  
Maryland General Assembly

RE: Testimony in Support of HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Aminah Johnson-Williams. I am a Maryland resident, a mother, and a co-founder of Legends Public Charter School in Prince George's County. I am also the parent of two students who attend Legends. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB1430.

Like many parents, my commitment to Legends is deeply personal—but it is also rooted in purpose. I made the decision to help co-found Legends Charter School as part of a legacy effort to provide scholars with a rigorous, advanced liberal arts education combined with financial education. Our goal has always been to empower students and families with the knowledge to open businesses, build wealth, invest, and give back to their communities. We believe education should prepare students not only for college and careers, but also for economic agency and community leadership.

When we founded Legends, we did so because we saw a gap in Maryland's educational landscape—particularly in Prince George's County. Families were seeking high-quality academic environments that challenged students intellectually while also preparing them for real-world success. We stepped forward to help build that opportunity.

Through that experience, I have seen firsthand the extraordinary amount of work required to create and sustain a world-class learning environment. Charter school founders and leaders take on responsibilities that traditional districts often support—from securing facilities to managing operational infrastructure—yet we do so with little assistance from local school systems and limited support from the state.

At Legends, we want our scholars to graduate not only prepared for college and careers, but also equipped to build businesses, invest in their communities, and shape their own economic futures. However, while charter schools are public schools serving Maryland families, they operate under

a fundamentally unequal system when it comes to facilities. Traditional public schools receive public funding for their buildings. Charter schools do not. Instead, charter schools must pay for facilities out of the same per-pupil funding that is intended to support teachers, instruction, and student services.

As both a school founder and a parent, I see firsthand how difficult that tradeoff can be. Every dollar spent on facilities is a dollar that cannot be invested directly into classrooms, student programming, or additional academic supports.

HB1430 would help address this inequity by providing \$1,600 per pupil in facilities funding for public charter schools. This support would help stabilize charter school budgets and ensure that resources are directed where they matter most—supporting students and strengthening instruction.

From a parent's perspective, this bill is about fairness. Families who choose charter schools are still Maryland taxpayers. Our children deserve access to safe, well-maintained learning environments without forcing schools to sacrifice academic resources to pay for buildings.

From a community perspective, this bill is about opportunity. Prince George's County families are actively seeking high-quality public school options. Schools like Legends are working every day to meet that demand, but equitable facilities funding is essential to sustaining and expanding that opportunity.

Maryland's public charter school students deserve the same commitment to their learning spaces as any other public school student.

I respectfully urge the committee to support HB1430 and help ensure that charter school families across Maryland have access to safe, stable, and properly funded learning environments.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maryland's students.

Respectfully,

Aminah Johnson-Williams  
Prince George's County Resident  
Co-Founder, Legends Public Charter School  
Parent of Legends Charter School Students