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FREDERICK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Michael C.
O'Connor
Mayor

January 19, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Maryland State Senate
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone,

I am writing to you today to express my support for [SB170](#): Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth, sponsored by Senator Lewis Young and Senator Ready. This bill takes a thoughtful and data driven approach to addressing school funding concerns in fast-growing communities such as the City of Frederick.

Throughout the State, municipalities and counties such as Frederick are experiencing rapid student population growth driven by new housing production, economic development, and demographic shifts, whereas education funding formulas unfortunately lag behind these realities. Local governments consistently approve housing, invest in infrastructure, and attract families, which immediately increases school capacity needs and operating costs, but state funding mechanisms often respond slowly and inconsistently compared to the pace of local growth. This is fundamentally a structural issue in how enrollment and funding are aligned, not a matter of individual or partisan decisions, and SB170 offers a constructive way to examine that structure.

SB170 takes a very calculated and reasonable approach to this issue by not raising taxes, rewriting formulas, or mandating specific funding outcomes, but rather establishes a time-limited Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth to study the problem comprehensively. By bringing together representatives from the General Assembly, State Department of Education, school boards, educators, parents, counties, superintendents, the Comptroller's Office, and the general public, SB170 ensures that any future proposals are grounded in shared data and experience. This approach allows for alignment in school funding policies with current enrollment and growth patterns before making any major fiscal or statutory changes.

Fast-growing municipalities such as Frederick are already seeing new school buildings fill to capacity as soon as they open, accompanied by rising class sizes and heightened staffing needs.

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Local governments are often forced to close gaps through capital investments, mitigation measures, or short-term fixes when state funding does not fully capture rapid enrollment growth. Even as the state manages a budget deficit under this administration and legislature, growth in Frederick and similar communities is a success story, but the current funding model has not kept pace with the demands generated by that success.

Local comprehensive plans, housing targets, and economic development strategies are based on calculated long-term projections, yet uncertainty around how student population growth will translate into school funding undermines this coordinated planning effort. When funding and enrollment projections do not reflect real-time growth, it becomes more difficult to organize land use decisions, capital budgets, and school construction schedules. The task force created by SB170 would help bridge this disconnect by examining how education finance can better support Maryland's growth management and planning goals.

The City of Frederick raises this issue as a constructive partner to the State, not as a critic. Local governments are helping drive Maryland's progress by approving new housing, investing in infrastructure, and supporting economic growth that strengthens communities statewide. SB170 offers Maryland a chance to update its education funding approach, in order for it to better match growth patterns. This allows for State and Local efforts to be aligned in support of students, families, and communities across the state.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Connor
Mayor, City of Frederick