

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1430, with two critical considerations: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools.

I am both a Maryland nonprofit leader in early childhood education and a parent of two children who attend Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School. Our school community is deeply important to our family. My children benefit every day from a Montessori approach that fosters independence, curiosity, and a genuine love of learning. Just as important, they are part of a diverse, supportive community where they feel known and valued.

However, like many charter schools, our school faces ongoing challenges related to facilities funding. Updated, safe, and functional facilities are not a luxury. They are a basic foundation for effective teaching and learning. When buildings are outdated or under-resourced, it directly impacts students' daily experiences and opportunities.

Currently, charter schools must use a portion of their per pupil funding to cover facilities costs. This means fewer resources are available for teachers, classroom materials, and student supports. In contrast, other public school students benefit from dedicated facilities funding. This creates an inequitable system where charter school students do not receive the same level of financial investment.

HB1430 helps correct this imbalance. The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is a thoughtful and fiscally responsible approach. It would also allow Maryland to access up to \$50 million in federal funding through the State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant, ensuring the State maximizes available resources rather than leaving federal dollars on the table.

Importantly, this bill does not take funding away from existing school construction programs. It creates new funding to address a longstanding gap.

It is also essential that the exclusion amendment be removed. Excluding certain charter schools based on district-level decisions creates inequity among public school students and jeopardizes Maryland's eligibility for federal funding, which requires a statewide, uniform approach.

At its core, this bill is about fairness. Charter school students are public school students. They deserve learning environments that are safe, functional, and fully supported, without sacrificing classroom resources to pay for buildings.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 with the full \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students in Maryland are treated equitably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Morgan D. Horvath". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "H".

Morgan D. Horvath, M.Ed.
Baltimore City Resident & Charter School Parent