

3/30/2026

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

I am writing to you today as a Maryland taxpayer, and—most importantly—a concerned father of a student currently attending a Maryland public charter school. I am writing to respectfully urge your support for HB1430, with two critical provisions: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

As a parent, I value what charter schools bring to our communities. Families often choose these schools for their innovative teaching methods, smaller class sizes, and rigorous curricula. However, a significant inequity exists:

- Traditional Public Schools: Facilities, maintenance, and utilities are covered by the district.
- Charter Schools: These same costs are often pulled directly from classroom dollars.

Every dollar spent on rent is a dollar taken away from textbooks, technology, and student support services. HB1430 offers a path toward correcting this imbalance. The proposed \$800 per pupil funding is not just reasonable; it is a strategic financial move for the State of Maryland:

- Federal Matching: Passage of this bill allows Maryland to access the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), potentially bringing in \$10 million annually for five years.
- Cost-Effectiveness: The total state investment would be less than the cost of a single new school construction project (which often exceeds \$40 million).
- Protecting Existing Funds: This bill does not divert current school construction funding; it creates a dedicated appropriation to support students without stripping resources from elsewhere.

I am deeply concerned by the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools. This provision is counterproductive for two reasons:

1. Inequity: It unfairly penalizes students based on their zip code, undermining the statewide intent of the program.
2. Federal Risk: To qualify for the \$50 million in federal SFIG funding, Maryland must have a uniform, statewide facilities program. Maintaining this exclusion risks losing those federal millions entirely.

HB1430 is a balanced, practical solution that ensures more funding reaches the classroom where it belongs. I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 at the \$800 per pupil level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students are treated equitably.

Thank you for your time, your service to our state, and your consideration of our children's future.

Sincerely,

Herbert Colding

Herbert Colding