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Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 27, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland State Senate  
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: SB 350 - Public Schools - Open Enrollment - Policies and Funding  
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about Senate Bill 350. This bill gives Maryland families something they have been asking for, a fair, realistic way to access public schools outside their county of residence without paying tuition. SB 350 is about opening doors that have been closed for far too long, especially for students who are ready for advanced coursework such as college career readiness pathways, career technical education programs, and dual enrollment opportunities.

Maryland operates 24 independent local school systems, each with its own transfer rules, timelines, and criteria. There is no statewide process for students to access programs outside of their home county, and Maryland is not listed among states with statewide open enrollment in federal school choice summaries. This leaves families navigating a confusing patchwork of rules with no clear or consistent way to pursue the programs their children need. According to data from the Maryland State Department of Education, more than 900,000 Maryland students are affected by these county-based boundaries, meaning access to advanced coursework or career and technical education programs depends heavily on where a student lives.

Students who are ready for these programs often cannot access them simply because their home county does not offer those opportunities. Families face inconsistent rules, unclear timelines, and no uniform process for seeking access to programs that align with their child's goals.

SB 350 creates a voluntary statewide framework that gives families a transparent way to request enrollment in another county when their home county lacks the program they need. The bill

preserves local control and respects capacity limits.

SB 350 does not mandate participation, shift funding, or override local control. It simply creates a voluntary, transparent process that counties can adopt based on their capacity and program availability. SB 350 provides families with a fair pathway opportunity without imposing new burdens on local school systems.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 350.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alonzo T. Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alonzo T. Washington  
Maryland State Senate  
District 22