



To Lead, Advocate and Connect as the Voice of Business

Senate Bill 641: Public School Construction - Maryland Stadium Authority - Montgomery County and Other School Systems With Significant Enrollment Growth

Budget and Tax

February 27, 2019

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 641 authorizes the Maryland Stadium Authority to issue bonds up to \$1 billion to finance the construction of Montgomery County Public School facilities. Additionally, the state would provide \$100 million in school construction funding for fiscal year 2021 and beyond.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce advocates for strategic capital spending, a positive business climate and balanced tax reform to further the success of our members and to affirm Maryland's place as relevant and competitive in the regional and global marketplace. The Montgomery County Public Schools are a primary economic driver in our county and quality education is a prerequisite to a skilled talent pool for employers. Accordingly, MCCC strongly supports this legislation.

School capital budgets are funded by state and local contributions. In Montgomery County, local funds are not enough to keep pace with unprecedented enrollments. State funding through existing formulas is no longer adequate for the needed construction projects. MCPS is consistently behind meeting school space needs, placing today's and tomorrow's students at a disadvantage at the very moment when businesses are counting on an educated and skilled talent pool to fill jobs that are created.

The solution lies in finding additional funding for this very real and acute need. The grant program would provide additional money from the state and be matched by local resources. This would give greater assurance that many of the shovel-ready projects in Montgomery County would receive the funding they need to move forward.

Montgomery County is an economic engine of the state. The quality educational system is a key feature of the county. When schools suffer, the chilling ripple effects will be felt throughout the economy. Conversely, the multiplier effect will be substantial if we are able to address the resource challenges of school construction. Some of the immediate benefits of the proposal include top ranked schools that attract businesses to our state, access to opportunity for all students, and a skilled talent pool for employers.

For these reasons, **we request Senate Bill 641 be given a favorable report.**

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) accelerates the success of our nearly 500 members by advocating for increased business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and is proud to be a Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

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