

HB-0860
Testimony in Favor

Wendel Thompson, co-chair
People Acting Together in Howard (PATH)
Maryland IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation)
House Appropriations Committee Hearing
March 5, 2013

I'm here to testify in favor of HB0860, a ten-year plan for school construction in Baltimore City. You might wonder why I, a resident of Howard County, should favor this bill. I belong to PATH, People Acting Together in Howard, part of the Maryland Industrial Areas Foundation that includes AIM in Montgomery County and Build in Baltimore City. In recent years we have worked together on legislation that affects people in each of our counties. How does school construction in Baltimore City affect us in Howard County?

I have a personal connection. I volunteer for a FISH, an emergency assistance program in Howard County. We handle calls from families in need; some of those families have moved to Howard County from Baltimore City. They may have moved to Howard County to seek a better environment for them and their families. I hope we can provide that for them. So we do have a connection with Baltimore City. Our lives are not separate, but connected as friends from Baltimore City come to visit in my home county.

We're connected in other ways. Who knows how often I am waited on by a store clerk who lives in Baltimore City but works in Howard County. And I meet City residents when I come to the city for concerts, dining, or business. We are connected with each other.

The health of Baltimore City is founded on having the same quality of school facilities we have in Howard County that attracts people to want to live there. The ten-year program provided by this bill will ensure Baltimore City schools are attractive, safe, and welcoming places for children that send them the message they are important.

I have asked my Delegates and my Senator to support this bill which will create a better Maryland for all of us.