



MARTIN O'MALLEY
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
410-974-3901
TOLL FREE: 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

March 3, 2010

The Honorable Ulysses Currie
Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Senate Bill 385 - Building Opportunities for All Students and
Teachers (BOAST) in Maryland Tax Credit**

Dear Chairman Currie and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for Senate Bill 385, which establishes the Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers (BOAST) in Maryland Tax Credit. The BOAST bill will provide an income tax credit for contributions made to a nonprofit organization that provides scholarships to eligible students and teachers in nonpublic schools. Contributions may also be made for grants to public schools to support innovative education programs or to support public school teachers with education costs. The legislation will establish a BOAST Reserve Fund and requires the State Department of Education to administer the program.

I want to thank Senator DeGrange for his leadership in sponsoring the BOAST legislation for the past three years. The BOAST bill will increase scholarships for children in low and middle income families and stabilize enrollment in nonpublic schools. I believe the bill is crucial if we are to stem the tide of private school closures in the State. These closures represent a loss of educational diversity and opportunity for our students and will ultimately increase costs and enrollment pressures on our public school systems. The BOAST tax credit will help preserve Maryland's rich tradition of highly performing public and private schools. Furthermore, it will save public schools systems from added costs that are far in excess of the public revenues needed to fund the tax credit.

For the above reasons, I respectfully urge the Budget and Taxation Committee and the General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 385 without further delay so the State can implement the BOAST tax credit this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin O'Malley', written over a white background.

Governor

cc: Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee