

Submitter: James Kirby
On Behalf Of: City View Charter School
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony to the Committee. My name is James Kirby and I am one of School Board Directors of City View Charter School, Hillsboro's only public Charter School.

Our school has been around for more than 18 years, and we currently serve more than 300 students over two Hillsboro campuses with a staff of 35. Real estate has been a challenge for us over the years, but we have been able to survive by renting unused church spaces and space directly from our Chartering district, Hillsboro School District. Our existing leases, however, are coming to an end and the Hillsboro School District will no longer be able to offer us unused space. These outside pressures have placed us on a path to bond-funded expansion into a single facility to bring our school, or as we call it, our Crew, back together on one campus.

This has been a journey for us. My own Board committee, the Build The Dream committee has been working for more than seven years to make this facility a reality for our Crew. Due to zoning requirements, industrial expansion in the silicon forest of Washington County, and residential infill, the inventory of properties that our Charter School is able to purchase or lease is non-existent. We have vetted hundreds of buildings and pieces of land, each with some hidden poison pill, forcing us to keep looking.

Despite these challenges, we have recently located and are contracting to buy and renovate a building in Hillsboro that is central to our student body and will be able to serve us for many years to come. This is where this bill comes into play for us. Our future school home is just across the district line while still being inside the City of Hillsboro's city limits. We have navigated this issue with both our District and the adjacent District and there are no issues unless this bill passes as currently written. With our lease deadlines looming and timelines getting shorter, if this bill passes, we will likely lose our investment in this new building and be forced to close our doors.

While I, as well as other City View folks, are testifying in opposition to this bill, it is only with the survival of our children's school in mind. My proposal would be that the committee considers an amendment to allow charter schools to locate in adjacent districts, but only when still within the city limits of a city the sponsoring district encompasses by 75% or more. A second option would be to allow out of district Charter Schools to operate, but only when located within a mile of the chartering district boundary.

I would submit that with one of these small amendments, this bill would allow City View Charter School and others who share our situation, to continue to keep our doors open and to allow us to build out a permanent home for our Crew.