



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of  
Senate Bill 803: Local Share of Major Education Aid – Nonrecurring Costs Exclusion**

**Budget and Taxation Committee**

**Position: Unfavorable**

February 28, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which calls for an equitable investment into the Maryland education system. **Strong Schools Maryland is writing in opposition to Senate Bill 803**, which allows a county board of education and a county governing body to exclude costs that are in excess to local share as nonrecurring and supplemental to the school's operating budget.

The passage of the Blueprint came with innovative funding approaches by the General Assembly and Administration and the reinforcement of the concept of "wealth equalized" where both the State and local jurisdictions come together to fully fund Maryland's education system.

We are concerned that Senate Bill 803:

- Mischaracterizes costs that are in excess of the local share amount as "nonrecurring" and supplemental, when those costs may be crucial and necessary to support students in the school district. The bill fails to define "certain expenditures" providing no limit to the allowable exclusion;
- Conflates the idea of local share of major education aid with the maximum a county needs to fund their schools, while it is truly the minimum; and
- Allows county/city governments to waive their commitment to fully fund the school system in comparison to previous years.

Education costs in Maryland are rising due to economic factors like inflation and because Maryland, with the passage of the Blueprint, recognized what it actually means to meet the needs of students so they can learn and thrive in school. Senate Bill 803 is an irresponsible attempt to shirk out the responsibility to fully fund schools at the local level.

**For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 803.**

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