



**Testimony in opposition to
House Bill 569: Primary and Secondary Education – Education Savings
Account Program – Established (Maryland Universal School Choice Act)**

**Appropriations Committee
Position: Oppose**

March 7, 2023

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. We advocate for legislative and regulatory policy changes to further educational equity and build the technical capacity of everyday Marylanders to hold state and local officials accountable to their responsibilities. **Strong Schools Maryland strongly opposes House Bill 569: Maryland Universal School Choice Act.**

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state’s students. The State is making record-breaking investments in education to ensure students thrive on a global scale. Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are grossly incompatible with this vision.

House Bill 569:

- Allows for the creation of Education Savings Accounts for families to pay nonpublic school tuition;
- Takes away funding from our public schools and puts it in personalized savings accounts that families can use at nonpublic “qualified schools;” and
- Targets students currently attending public school, resulting in negative implications for other students, staff, and communities as a whole.

This bill is very similar to the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) Education Savings Account Act model legislation, which has been introduced in many states across the country.¹ In addition to the drastic misdirection of public funds to public education and the disenfranchisement of taxpayers, Education Savings Accounts are associated with horrible oversight and accountability measures.²

In passing the Blueprint, the General Assembly made the commitment to students: five pillars to transform public education, through equitable practices, so that Maryland's student achievement would be competitive with not just every state in the country, but with the highest achieving countries in the world. House Bill 569 will only hold us back as we set out to create World-Class schools for *all* students. Therefore, **we strongly urge an unfavorable report on the bill.**

*For more information, contact Maddie Long:
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¹ [ALEC](#)

² [Forbes](#)