

UNLOCK HOPE
INVEST IN YOUTH



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 17, 2025**

My name is Mona Kurian, and I am a student from Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. Last year my school experienced a funding cut, and many of my favorite teachers were forced to leave to work at other schools. This was incredibly impactful for the students at my school, as these teachers created an amazing atmosphere at my school and the school felt very different to go to every day. As a senior now, I won't personally experience the effects of this bill if passed, but I want those who are younger than me, specifically many of my young cousins, to be able to experience the level of education I was able to, if not better.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. Personally, I know many of my friends entered elementary school not knowing English. Fortunately, they were given the resources to learn English, thus helping them adapt better to the school environment and not fall behind. If these incredibly important programs were not in place and went without funding, they wouldn't be as successful as they are today.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mona Kurian

Maryland Youth and Government

monakurian@gmail.com