

Anthony Tilghman Testimony February 19, 2025

Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee / Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committee

Position: Oppose

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anthony Tilghman, and I serve as a Commissioner for the City of District Heights, testifying today in my personal capacity. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 429, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines critical investments in our students, educators, and communities at a time when they need support the most.

Key Concerns with SB429:

1 Teacher Shortages & Professional Development Cuts

Maryland is already struggling with teacher shortages. Delaying collaborative time grants will prevent educators from accessing necessary professional development and planning time, making it harder to retain high-quality teachers and improve instruction.

2 Harming Community Schools & Vulnerable Students

SB429 delays funding for community schools, which serve as lifelines for students in low-income communities. Concentration of Poverty grants—which provide mental health services, after-school programs, and multilingual support—will be cut or frozen, leaving vulnerable students without the resources they were promised.

3 Breaking Maryland's Commitment to Education

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was a historic commitment to transforming education, and SB429 weakens this effort by cutting resources when schools need them the most. Instead of pulling back, we should be finding progressive revenue solutions to fully fund education, such as through Fair Share Maryland.

 **Call to Action: Vote NO on SB429**

Cutting education funding now will have long-term consequences, not just for our schools, but for the economic and social future of Maryland. I urge you to reject SB429 and uphold the state's promise to students, educators, and families by ensuring full funding for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Anthony Tilghman

Anthony Tilghman

Award-Winning Photojournalist, Executive Director of #MakeSmartCool Inc

www.anthonytighman.com