

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of  
Senate 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees  
House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees**

**Position: Oppose  
February 19, 2025**

My name is Daniel Levine, and I am a parent and former teacher from Baltimore City. 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.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers. I left teaching at the end of the 2023-24 school year after five years in the classroom, in significant part due to severe burnout that had affected my physical and mental health. One contributor to that burnout was the fact that limited in-school planning time meant that my duties to the school felt relentless - even working evenings and weekends to stay on top of the many needs of my students, I constantly felt behind. Conversely, some of the best experiences I was able to provide students in my classroom came from collaboration with my colleagues - for instance, a fellow history teacher and I, along with collaboration from one of the literature teachers, designed an extended unit diving into a book about resistance to the Nazis, written by a local Baltimore author. Thanks to our ability to plan together - though often done outside of our normal work hours (over lunch, via evening emails, etc.) because we were all slammed during our actual planning periods - we were able to provide a deeper engagement for students and even bring the author in to speak with students at the end of the semester.

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,  
Daniel Levine

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