



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

## Testimony in **OPPOSITION** to Senate Bill 429 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

### **Budget and Taxation Committee Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

### **UNFAVORABLE**

**To:** Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair; Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair; and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

**To:** Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair; and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

**From:** The Rev. Margaret E. VanAuker, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network; Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

**Date:** February 19, 2025

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, the advocacy arm of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, has always supported policies that boldly and consistently push toward ensuring that all students have equitable access to high-quality schools. We are 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.

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.

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

**We request an unfavorable report.**