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SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT
SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 429: Excellence in Marland Public Schools Act
Date: February 17, 2025
POSITION: OPPOSE

Committee Chairs and Members

I am Kalman “Buzzy” Hettleman, an education policy analyst and former member of the Kirwan Commission.

I admire the hard, good work you do. Still, it seems near-impossible for any member to fully penetrate the complexity of this year’s budget and the Administration’s spin on it.

Yes, the state has a severe fiscal shortfall to deal with. But the simple truth is: First, the budget and SB 429 will cut literally billions of dollars from the funding for the Blueprint. And second, school funding and schoolchildren have been asked to bear a huge, disproportionate share of the fiscal pain.

The Administration justifies the largest cuts on the ground that Collaborative Time will require many more teachers who will be hard to recruit. That’s true. But what is omitted in the spin is that the savings could be spent incrementally on Collaborative Time and, even more, on the many parts of the Blueprint that are under-funded and dragging down implementation. Like interventions for struggling learners in reading and math; support staff like behavioral specialists; and fiscal relief for underwater local governments.

More than ever, state government seems to be renegeing on its commitment to students especially those poor, Black and Brown.

Our schoolchildren are depending on you to get at the truth and then have the political courage to do something about it.

Thank you.