



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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SB 429 - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Senate Budget and Taxation/Education, Energy and the Environment Committees
February 19, 2025

OPPOSE

Donna S. Edwards
President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 429. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 429 represents a regressive step in Maryland's commitment to our students, teachers, school support staff, and communities by undermining the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, a historic, bipartisan investment in education. The Blueprint was designed to mitigate inequities that disproportionately affect minority communities and ensure that students receive the support they need to succeed. This legislation threatens these goals by reducing and delaying critical funding meant to uplift our most vulnerable students.

Notably, SB 429 significantly delays funding for grants such as the Concentration of Poverty grants for community schools which provide essential wraparound services such as mental health care, after-school programming, and multilingual support. Additionally, these grants help create and sustain after-school tutoring and enrichment programs, which have proven to be effective in improving literacy and math proficiency. Many students in our state rely on these services to be successful—without them, we risk robbing students of personalized support that helps them thrive, widening achievement gaps and perpetuating inequities we set out to eliminate.

The effects of this bill will disproportionately impact communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment due to discriminatory policies and practices. By cutting and delaying critical funding, we reinforce systemic barriers that limit access to necessary resources. Instead of scaling back our efforts, we should live up to our commitment to education and fostering equitable opportunities.

For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable vote on SB 429.