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TESTIMONY ON SB#/0429 – FAVORABLE

Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

TO: Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee; Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee; Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the Appropriations Committee; and Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0429, Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

The state’s education reform plan needs some reforms if it’s to survive a looming multibillion-dollar budget deficit and deliver on its promises, school leaders and local elected officials said ...

The comments at a Maryland Association of Counties conference panel came one day after the Public-School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland released a 30-point plan for policy and legislative changes to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, the sweeping school reform plan.

The main message from the panel titled “What We’ve Learned from Learning: The Blueprint in Year Three”: One size does not fit all. ¹

This bill is a response to the state’s current financial deficit conditions through altering the definitions of target per pupil foundation amount, collaborative time per pupil amount, and special education per pupil amount for certain fiscal years. It will alter the source of funds for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund to include the interest earnings of the Academic Excellence Fund. Without funding availability it will affect the state budget by freezing certain increases in the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program for certain fiscal years and will establish the Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grant and the Academic Excellence Program and Fund.

This is an imperfect solution but a necessary one to respond to the budget conditions that currently exist in Maryland.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass SB0429.

¹ <https://marylandmatters.org/2024/12/12/county-school-leaders-say-changes-needed-to-the-blueprint-education-reform-plan/>