

**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 Crosby Blair, and I am an educator from Frederick. 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.

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 (COP) 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. As the CommUNITY School Coordinator for my local elementary school, I have witnessed the empowerment, support and aid that COP provides to my students and their families. A spending freeze will have a direct negative impact on my community at a time in which they need hope and help the most.

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,

Crosby Blair

Lincoln Elementary, Frederick County Public Schools

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