

Written Testimony in Support of SB 429 / HB 504 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Dear Committee Members,

Without a doubt all Marylanders are in favor of improving our education system to be globally competitive, albeit, within a fair and reasonable and fiscally sound budget.

Respect is expressed for the effort the Kirwan Commission members put into the study of, and their final recommendations for, the establishment of *The Blueprint for Maryland's Future*.

As we know, the Kirwan Commission "estimated" the funding cost to implement their recommendations, *The Blueprint*, to be \$32Billion over the 10 year implementation period. However, according to revised Department of Legislative Services estimates, the funding required to implement *The Blueprint* will be more, much more, than originally estimated, 3 – to – 6 times more! Therefore, *The Blueprint will require funding somewhere between approximately \$90Billion and \$180Billion.* An astounding amount of money, which is totally unaffordable and unsustainable at State and County levels.

To illustrate the consequence the new estimated funding expense will have on Marylanders, let's, just for example, take the cost of *The Blueprint* at the low-end ≈\$90Billion, spread it evenly over all Maryland households. (≈ is the symbol for approximately.)

Per Census, there are ≈2,200,000 Maryland households.
 $≈\$90,000,000,000.00 / ≈2,200,000 = ≈\$41,000.00 \text{ per household on average.}$

Concedingly, this is an eye-opening calculation; resulting in a genuinely shocking unaffordable and unsustainable amount of money on a per household basis.

We have a 10% poverty rate in Maryland, with many households living paycheck-to-paycheck. How in the world will Marylanders be able to shoulder the financial requirements of funding the implementation of *The Blueprint*? As we are finding out, it can't be done! Especially on top of ever increasing real estate assessment tax bills [20%], home energy bills [50-100%], home owner's insurance bills [20%], car insurance bills [20%], and for retired people, supplemental health insurance bills [20%].

The Blueprint is bankrupting Maryland, whether you want to outwardly admit it or not!

As we all know, any fee or tax imposed by the General Assembly to fund *The Blueprint* will trickle down to the cost of all goods and services in Maryland, making Maryland's cost-of-living even higher than it is now, which is ranked 7th highest in the nation. To which there is discussion for Legislation to raise the minimum wage from \$15.00/Hr to \$20.00/Hr because the cost of living in Maryland is so high! (DUH!)

A question for all of you:

Who among you would decide to fully upgrade your home with: a new roof and siding; new kitchen cabinets and countertops, sinks, faucets; all new appliances - refrig, dish washer, electric stove & oven; fresh coat of interior paint; all new light fixtures; or a new HVAC system without first and foremost, being financially prudent and practical people, establishing how much you can afford and how you are going to pay for it? NO ONE! And yet, that is exactly what is happening with *The Blueprint*.

Implementation of *The Blueprint* must be paused for review, and scale back, to a more financially affordable and sustainable program.

For this reason I support Governor Moore's SB429 / HB504 and urge a Favorable vote.

With kind regards and best wishes expressed for everyone's continued success,
Michael Waal
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