

HB 930 – Income Tax – Decoupling From Federal Changes – Education Expenses
House Ways and Means Committee
Position: Favorable
February 26, 2026

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system, **offers favorable testimony in support of HB930 – Income Tax – Decoupling From Federal Changes – Education Expenses.**

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Education has always been prized as a ticket to a better life. Centuries ago, many of our ancestors put their lives on the line to learn how to read. Access to education was deemed so critical that it was [one of the first things](#) recently-freed Black communities developed during Reconstruction. In the 1960s, our young people continued to overcome [immeasurable odds](#) just to sit with their White peers in class. Today, our young people face a new threat – federal privatization of K-12 education. Our public schools are under attack from programs like the Federal Voucher Tax Credit recently passed by Congress and championed by President Trump's 'One Big Beautiful Bill Act,' which aims to funnel money away from public education — available to all — and toward a system of private schooling that can pick and choose whom to serve. **By stopping Maryland from participating in such a program, HB930 represents an important step towards safeguarding Maryland's public education system for generations to come.**

THE THREAT THE FEDERAL VOUCHER TAX CREDIT POSES

This new Federal Voucher Tax Credit is designed to hide its intentions – shifting money from public to private schools. By providing a one-of-a-kind dollar-for-dollar tax credit that funnels taxpayer funds into private schools, the federal government will be giving up billions of dollars in tax revenue annually. This extraordinary cost, estimated to be up to [\\$51b](#) per year, will likely force the federal government to cut funding for critical public services, including the funding our public schools rely on like IDEA and Title 1. Our state receives, on average, [\\$1,494 dollars per student](#) in funding from the federal government, and for those schools serving students with the largest needs, this funding is much higher. This funding supports 15,592 school staff and supports essential services like paraprofessionals for students with special needs and school meals that may represent students' main food for the day. These funds are not simply a nice addition to state dollars. **They are a critical component of Maryland schools' ability to support students. The Federal Voucher Tax Credit program puts that funding in jeopardy** – while failing to provide a viable option for those students with the greatest needs.

WHY THE FEDERAL PROGRAM WON'T SERVE ALL STUDENTS

Voucher programs were [first created to help](#) white families flee desegregation following *Brown v. Board of Education*. The legacy of these programs continues today, with voucher programs **overwhelmingly used by white, [wealthy](#) families**. Unlike public schools, private schools are not obligated to serve all students. The private schools that participate in these programs, which let's be clear are receiving *public tax payer dollars*, have full discretion over which students they enroll, and have been **documented discriminating against students with [low grades or test scores](#), students**

with disciplinary histories, students of [minority faiths](#), multilingual learners, and [LGBTQ+ students](#), just to name a few. The over policing and adultification of Black and Brown youth, coupled with rampant underinvestment in the schools that serve them, makes it more likely that students of color will fall into any of the above categories and find it harder to use this federal program. Furthermore, because private schools are not required to provide special education services, private schools participating in the federal voucher program can and will discriminate against [students with disabilities](#). Finally, low-income families will also find themselves shut out, since voucher amounts [rarely cover tuition](#) at participating private schools, who often [raise their tuition even further](#) when voucher programs are passed. This leaves the natural question – who does this program benefit? Unsurprisingly, the majority of students who use vouchers come from [high-income families](#) already enrolled in private schools. With few accountability requirements placed on the organizations participating in this federal program, MAREE is gravely concerned that it will only replicate the inequities of its predecessors, [deepening segregation](#) and creating an inequitable, two-tiered education system in Maryland.

MARYLAND SHOULD UPHOLD ITS COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Despite the false promise a voucher program provides, **MAREE acknowledges that many parents are understandably dissatisfied with the education their child is receiving in public school.** For generations, our Black and Brown students have attended [underfunded](#) schools that don't provide them with the support they need. **MAREE believes our students deserve better, and Maryland agrees, which is why in 2019 we made a commitment to re-invest in public education through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.** The Blueprint represents a renewed commitment to improving our public education system so that ALL students can succeed. It creates new accountability metrics to ensure schools support every student, provides additional funding for those students with higher needs, increases investments in educator training, and ensures that every child receives an education that prepares them for college or career. The federal voucher program provides none of these protections – it will push our students across Maryland into an education system that lacks accountability and refuses to serve students who have already been underserved for decades.

Our students deserve an education system that works for everyone – not just those with the money, power, skin color, or background to be deemed eligible. Instead of opting into a program that will fail to serve the students who need it most, Maryland should pass HB930, reject federal vouchers, and continue to demonstrate its belief in the importance of public education. In passing the Blueprint 7 years ago, Maryland showed that it is committed to the wellbeing of EVERY student in the state. MAREE implores the state to stand by that commitment and **urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on HB930.**

peace & truth,
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