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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AFT-Maryland Statement on Gov. Hogan's Veto of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Legislation aka Kirwan & Revenue Generating Legislation

Baltimore, MD- AFT-Maryland is deeply disappointed in Governor Hogan's decision to ignore the bi-partisan enactment of the Kirwan Commission School reforms. With his veto of HB1300, the Blueprint for Maryland's future, Governor Hogan has unfortunately reverted to out-of-date and tired rhetoric that has proven to be ineffective at bringing positive change to public education. To do so in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that is exposing the resource gaps of so many Baltimore city students is disappointing.

The commission which worked for nearly four years to deliberate and put forth these recommendations not only had numerous, bi-partisan education experts weighing-in on these policy recommendations, but had numerous appointments that Governor Hogan directly made himself, including Budget Secretary David Brinkley. Maryland students and teachers deserve far more than an executive who at the 11th hour decides these reforms are not in line with his own limited vision and uses a global pandemic which magnifies the problem to justify his reasoning.

Meanwhile, with this veto, the people in power continue to play politics with the education of Maryland's students, and our public school system continues to flounder. No longer is Maryland considered to be among the top public school systems in the nation, and without the proper reforms put in place with this bill, no plan has been put in place to change this course.

Additionally we are profoundly disappointed to learn Governor Hogan has vetoed HB 732 & HB932. These proposed laws would modernize Maryland tax code to shift more of the tax burden in the state from working residents to the richest 1%. The legislature should act swiftly to override this veto by the Governor, as it threatens to cripple the state's ability to respond to the budget crisis brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic.

Indeed, one important lesson we are learning from the spread of the new coronavirus is that our state and local governments must be prepared and funded appropriately in order to provide complete and equitable services to all residents, regardless of their income and social status. We have arrived at our current, broken tax system through years—generations even—of creating tax loopholes that the most privileged have been able to exploit. The bills have been written to modernize the tax code by making sure those who have the ability to pay their fair share do so, and the state may be able to provide basic services to everyone. Maryland can no longer afford to forgo badly needed revenues while the one percent continue to pad their wealth.

We call on the state legislature to reconvene a special session as soon as safety will allow to override these unfortunate vetoes. As the state continues to weather the COVID-19 epidemic, all economic resources must be made available in order for Maryland to meet the challenges this problem poses to all of us.

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