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To College. Through College.

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Cassie Motz, Executive Director
CollegeBound Foundation

WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 25, 2020

HB 1011

My name is Cassie Motz and I am the Executive Director of the CollegeBound Foundation in Baltimore.

CollegeBound has a long history of providing college advising to low-income 11th and 12th graders in Baltimore City. Since 1988, CollegeBound has worked exclusively with Baltimore City public high school students, the vast majority of whom are low-income. Many City Schools' students struggle with the lasting effects of poverty, addiction, violence, incarceration, crime, abuse, and isolation. College acceptance is a significant accomplishment for Baltimore City public school students, but is only the beginning of an arduous journey to a college degree. Fewer than half of Baltimore City Schools' graduates attend college in the fall after high school graduation. Among low-income enrollees (FARMS-eligible) for the classes of 2008-2010 who began their studies in a 4-year college the fall after graduation, only 39% had earned a 4-year degree within 6 years of graduating; for those who began at a 2-year college, a mere 4% had earned a degree.¹

The Maryland Higher Education Commission Outreach and College Access [Pilot] Program (MD-HEOCAP) funded the development of CollegeBound's College Completion Program from 2016-2019, which supported two cohorts of nearly 100 Baltimore City public school graduates attending college in Maryland. The College Completion Program is a multi-year support network that connects students to a CollegeBound advisor, adult mentor, and on-campus peer mentor network. The program is designed as an intrusive advising model that identifies potential barriers before they result in students dropping out. Incoming freshmen gather in early August for a three-day "Transition to College" Retreat that equips them with the tools to navigate the academic and social challenges that they will inevitably face. Workshops for all participants take place at the end of each semester with delivered content shaped by immediate needs identified by the program team.

The program is working. 141 of the now 161 (88%) participants are still enrolled in college. 40 of the 44 students (91%) who entered college in Fall 2017 are still enrolled, which is a tremendous accomplishment; only 55% of students in the same Fall 2017 cohort who received funding but did not participate in the program, are still enrolled. The CollegeBound advisor who supported the cohort through ongoing reach-outs, including in-person visits, calls, texts, and emails, was funded almost entirely by MD-HEOCAP.

The College Completion Program has grown steadily each year to support three cohorts totaling 161 City Schools' graduates attending 14 Maryland colleges and universities. The program will grow to over 200 City Schools' graduates in Fall 2020, a formidable caseload that will require an additional advisor to continue providing the high-quality support to which participants have become accustomed.

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The reinstating of MD-HEOCAP through HB1011 will give much-needed funding to effective, but nascent programs like CollegeBound's College Completion Program that continue to rely on the support of outside funders to exist. These programs have already proven to meet the core purpose of the original bill to encourage low-income Maryland high school students to attend and complete college. CollegeBound and the other nonprofit organizations previously funded by MD-HEOCAP are established in the community with proven track records of supporting students to and through college.

CollegeBound appreciates its partnership with MHEC and Maryland's colleges in helping our state's next generation further their dreams and better their circumstances. We support HB 1011 as a way to support more talented, low-income students who are committed to earning a college degree in Maryland.

If there are any questions I can be reached at cmotz@collegeboundfoundation.org or (202) 494-5469 (cell).

Thank you for your consideration.

Cassie Motz
Executive Director, CollegeBound Foundation

¹ <http://baltimore-berc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CollegeFactBookJanuary2017.pdf>