



Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 446:

Institutions of Postsecondary Education – Disorderly School Closures

TO: Hon. Paul Pinsky, Chair, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Christopher Dews, Policy Advocate

DATE: February 12th, 2020

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates for policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. JOTF specifically supports this legislation as a means to reduce untoward debts upon vulnerable populations for an educational institution's malpractice.

We are writing today in support of bill SB 446 which will define what an orderly school closure is; prohibit a closing school from not properly notifying students of its closure and failing to obtain transfer agreements; prevent an institution from collecting on student debt, and holds executive officers personally liable for disorderly closures.

In the past five years, 17 Maryland for-profit campus locations have closed impacting 6,872 students. When a school closes, students should not be left scrambling trying to figure out how they will complete their degrees, obtain their transcripts, or burdened with paying a debt to an institution that is no longer operational.

Although Maryland cannot prohibit schools from abruptly closing, it can create incentives for schools to close in a way that is less harmful to students and is not an abrupt closure. Clear guidelines for how schools conduct closures are needed to protect students and ensure that schools cannot close in a disorderly way.

We hope you take this opportunity to protect all Maryland students from experiencing an abrupt school closure. We urge you to move favorably on SB 446.