



**Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee**

**TESTIMONY**

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**BILL: SB 610** Community Colleges – Supplemental Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities Grant Program

**POSITION:** Support

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges representing Maryland's 16 community colleges fully supports SB 610. Maryland's community colleges are open access institutions experiencing a growing diversity of students including students with physical and intellectual disabilities. Our colleges welcome this increasing diversity and have attempted to provide the supplementary support services necessary for a successful fulfilling experience on our campuses.

The range of services which include sign language assistants, tutorial services, autistic assistants, vary by need of the individual. This also requires awareness training for college personnel as we support these populations. The cost last fiscal year for these services at all community colleges was \$5.7 million.

Unlike the K-12 education sector, community colleges have no fiscal source for providing these services. These individuals not only need these supplemental services, but also have become dependent on them, having had them provided in their previous educational experiences.

Funding for SB 610 is an investment in the future of disabled students and Maryland's economy, because the skills they acquire at our community colleges will allow them to become contributing members of our society. This is an investment worth making.