

Ways and Means Committee of the Maryland House of Delegates  
Room 131, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**TESTIMONY HB1421**

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Quantane Higginbotham and I am a parent, grandparent and community advocate in Prince George's County, MD. I have dedicated my life to advocate for students or that child who do not have parental advocates in their household and trust me, there are many. As a Marylander, we want to afford our scholars every opportunity that Maryland can provide them. Having said that, today I submit my written testimony in support of HB1421 concerning Advanced Courses-Automatic Enrollment.

Why? As stated in the beginning my testimony, there are students in the State of Maryland who have been overlooked and have missed opportunities due to lack of advocacy. As a PTA leader, I hear of parents who are uninformed about these opportunities because they are not fully engaged in their child's education or just do not know.

Research show's students who are exposed to rigorous curriculum perform better across multiple measures in school, including higher graduation rates and higher rates of matriculation to college. There are too many students and families who have been left behind in the State of Maryland and as an advocate for education, we can no longer afford our scholars with a disadvantage in their education.

Colleges are looking for students who taken rigorous coursework, some of our scholars have been set back due to missed opportunities while in high school. Why do I mention missed opportunities? Students of color and low-income who are well above grade level and many times are performing better than their privileged peers are still being tracked into lower level classes. Maryland, we can do better. Our students should not be overlooked due to their economic status. If they have earned it, they should be rewarded for their hard work. There are some students who do not have their parents advocating on their behalf, I am one of those who are advocating for that child and we do not want that student left behind.

HB1421 is finally bringing innovative solutions to this important problem. We need the in Maryland.