

Testimony of Ryan Khaghani

In support of: **S.B. 904** –

Relating to Sales and Use Tax – Tax-Free Periods – University and College Textbooks

Thursday, March 05, 2021

Dear Senator Guzzone, Senator Rosapepe, and members of the Committee on Budget and Taxation,

My name is Ryan Khaghani, I am currently a second-year undergraduate student enrolled at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am writing today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 904, relating to Sales and Use Tax – Tax-Free Periods – University and College Textbooks.

As a Pell Grant recipient, I know first-hand the overwhelming toll finances take on a student's life. I also know that what might seem like mere pocket change to some, could mean eating or skipping a meal for a student on a tight budget. Making textbooks tax-exempt would put money back into the pockets of hardworking college students – and for most of us, every dollar truly counts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of students were forced to leave their on-campus jobs when colleges halted in-person learning. This meant a loss of a steady stream of income for many of my peers, income many would use to pay for school-related expenses such as workbooks and textbooks. While their income might have disappeared, those school-related expenses didn't. Last semester, even with remote learning, I spent over five hundred dollars on textbooks and other class-related expenses. While I would have typically used the money I earned through my retail job to pay for these expenses, I lost my job last spring so I was forced to dip into my savings. These expenses added yet another weight on my shoulders during an already stressful time, and after speaking to many of my peers, I know my situation is not an isolated one.

Students are the future leaders of our country, and they are currently facing unprecedented levels of financial stress. On behalf of all my peers, I urge you to support S.B. 904 so the students of our state can earn a degree without the shadow of expensive textbooks hanging over their heads. Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony submitted by:

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