
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

February 14, 2023

HB 356 - Public Institutions of Higher Education – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policy

Letter of Information

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to share information on House Bill 356. The Maryland Association of Community Colleges thanks the sponsor Delegate Healy and other co-sponsors of this bill for your concern for our pregnant and parenting students, and your efforts to ensure that Title IX protections are in place to support their success.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces, among other statutes, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. One of the less well-known aspects of Title IX is that it protects the rights of pregnant and parenting students to stay in school and confers a status of "...pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom."

While this bill may appear duplicative of the rights enshrined in Title IX, protecting this provision in state law ensures that our pregnant and parenting students will always have the benefits afforded under Title IX.

All community colleges abide by the law and afford our pregnant and parenting students these protections. Each college has a policy in place and works with students to meet their needs. Our colleges also communicate Title IX rights to students on their webpages.

The sixteen institutions that the Maryland Association of Community Colleges represents understand the rights of pregnant and parenting students and fully support all the General Assembly's efforts to protect them. We realize that students' lives and individual circumstances do not stop when they pursue their education, and the protections afforded in this bill are a small but important part of everything we do to retain and graduate them.

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you on this critical legislation. We appreciate your support for our students.

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