United Way
United Way
of Central Maryland

Testimony Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee.
HB0384: Institutions of Higher Education - Transcripts –
Prohibition on Punitive Measures Related to Student Debt
Position: *Favorable*

To whom it may concern:

Hello, my name is Preaundrea Franklin. I attended Howard University (HU) from 2009-2010. During this time, I acquired a bill that unfortunately was not covered by financial aid. After attending HU, I then attended Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) to obtain my associate's degree. However, last year when I attempted to enroll at Coppin State University (CSU) in pursuit of my bachelor's degree, they would not proceed forward in the enrollment process because I needed my official transcript from HU—which I could not obtain due to having a balance due.

Luckily, I was finally able to pay off my debt to HU, receive my transcript and matriculate into CSU. My main issue with this is, despite entering into a repayment plan and successfully making on-time monthly payments to HU, they still refused to release my official transcript. I don't think that it is fair to penalize students who are making every effort to pay off their debts while staying in school to complete their education.

Unfortunately, things don't always work out at certain colleges or universities, and students have to attend another school in order to find one that is a good fit, plus one that offers courses that they can actually afford. There should be a different way of handling these debts instead of penalizing them by withholding transcripts that ultimately prevents a student from achieving their educational and career goals.

HB0384 addresses this issue and prohibits this practice that has no place within higher education. For all these reasons, I strongly support HB0384 and urge a favorable report to prevent others from encountering similar issues that I had to face.

Thank you,

Preaundrea Franklin
Sr. Administrative Coordinator, Social Impact Accelerator | Development
e pre.fanklin@uwcm.org