

**Committees:** Appropriations

**Testimony on:** HB295 - University System of Maryland - Student Withdrawal - Reimbursement of Tuition and Fees (Cameron Carden Act of 2023)

**Position:** Favorable

10 February 2023

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and the members of the Appropriations Committee,

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports HB295 that allows students to safely and efficiently withdraw from universities within Maryland’s educational system under certain extenuating circumstances that pose a threat to the student’s physical or mental well-being.

My name is Caroline Thorne, and I serve as the Director of Government Affairs for the University of Maryland’s Student Government Association. On behalf of our SGA, I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 295, the Cameron Carden Act of 2023 to ensure students in extenuating circumstances are able to withdraw from university and receive reimbursement for their tuition and fees.

College students today juggle an array of challenges. Other than the typical stressors of coursework, navigating relationships, and being away from home often for the first time, students today have navigated forms of loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic, mass violence, war, economic strain, social injustice on a national scale, and much more. Student mental health is worsening.

Many institutions already have allowances for withdrawing due to physical injury, illness or hospitalization, but mental health crises are not included in these policies. This bill would ensure that mental health is treated just as importantly as physical health. It would also ensure students aren’t financially punished for taking care of their health, by requiring reimbursement be made for students needing to withdraw.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on HB295.

Thank you,



*Caroline Thorne, Student Government Association Director of Government Affairs*  
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