

Committee: Appropriations Committee

Testimony on: HB384

Position: Favorable

6 February 2023

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

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports HB384 that prohibits an institution of higher education from refusing to provide a current or former student with a transcript because the student owes a debt to the institution of higher education.

The current practice of allowing the University of Maryland System to withhold transcripts from students for even the most minor amounts of debt can cause a significant amount of harm to a student's financial wellbeing and disproportionately hurts low income and working students.

Like thousands of students I attend college because of the opportunities it can provide to get a higher paying job that will support me and my family. When students are denied the ability to receive their transcripts colleges and universities fail to provide these same opportunities to students in-debt and especially low income and working students.

When students have their transcripts withheld it becomes difficult for them to prove they earned a degree to a potential employer and as a result find a job. Withholding transcripts due to unpaid debt keeps graduates in a cycle of debt because they cannot pay off their debt without a job and cannot get a job without their transcript. Students should not be denied job opportunities, graduate schooling, or any chance to improve their life because an institution of higher education is holding their transcript as a form of coercion. This policy denies equal opportunity to students in-debt and as a result institutions of higher education are failing to live up to their promise.

By enacting this bill into law, students in-debt will be treated the same as any other student, and all students will have the same opportunities to succeed and make the most of their education.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on HB384.

Thank you,



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