



Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Bill 295
Public Institutions of Higher Education – Student Withdrawal Policy –
Reimbursement of Tuition and Fees
March 22, 2023
Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members, House Bill 295 requires each public institution of higher education to adopt a policy authorizing students to withdraw for extenuating circumstances such as illness, injury, hospitalization and mental health and wellness. The bill was amended in the House and the University System of Maryland (USM) supports the bill before the committee today.

University System of Maryland institutions work closely with students experiencing challenges with physical and mental health to help them complete their studies or return to campus after a hiatus. Presently, each USM institution has specific policies and processes to support these students.

One commonality is that withdrawal policies begin with the first day of instruction and the failure to attend the university or attend classes does not change this policy. Institutions and students must consider the implications of withdrawal for the purposes of the return of federal financial *or Return of Title IV funds (R2T4)*. For the student, the percentage of funds returned decrease in the first three weeks of a semester. The funds schedule may vary campus-to-campus, but generally, students can expect a 90% refund in the 1st week; 50% in the second week; and 25% in the 3rd week. Regardless, students receiving Title IV federal financial aid must complete exit counseling as a condition of their loan agreement. That process begins here: <https://studentaid.gov/exit-counseling/> Beyond that timeframe, our focus is to work with students so that they may complete the course successfully.

At one USM institution in 2021, the Exception to Enrollment Policy received approximately 200 applications. The school approved 33% of them. In many cases, the student was able to receive a W grade, which allowed them to withdraw from a course instead of failing. Further, for extenuating circumstances in which the student's verified last date of attendance/participation in the course was during the published refund period, in addition to the retroactive enrollment adjustment (i.e. grade change from F to W), the student would be refunded accordingly.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our position on House Bill 295.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of twelve institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of twenty-one members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

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