

**Committees:** Education, Energy and the Environment

**Testimony on:** SB248

**Position:** Favorable

7 February 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports SB248 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.

Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you. My name is Shivani Sidh and I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB248.

Punitive measures within the academic realm must be eradicated. Such practices stifle the pursuit of progress and educational experiences, each of which are lauded and promoted by higher education institutions. Whether a transcript will be utilized to apply to graduate school or to seek employment, it is a student's right to receive their records. Withholding transcripts does not generate the payments that are desired, but instead, simply perpetuates a stagnant state. This furthers financial difficulties, as it prevents students from developing the means to earn and pay off their debt.

Prohibiting this prerogative not only negatively impacts those pursuing engagements beyond the institution, but may also prevent current students from engaging in essential learning experiences such as internships.

Withholding transcripts also infringes upon equal opportunity, as it targets individuals facing difficult financial circumstances. This maintains the disproportionate representation in higher education institutions, as it excludes individuals solely based on their financial status.

Given the factors detailed prior, I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB248.

Thank you,



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