



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: HB 427: Higher Education - Community College Facilities Renewal Grant Program - Alterations

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee,

I commend Delegate Jones for sponsoring House Bill 427, which would double the number of Community College Facilities Renewal Grants available each year so that every community college can receive this critical funding.

Community colleges play an integral role in our communities and in Maryland's economy. During my annual State of the County address last year, I was pleased to announce an additional \$10 million commitment in capital funding for the Howard Community College Workforce Development and Skilled Trades Center. This center will be a beacon of innovation and increase our economic vitality statewide by providing practical training in cybersecurity, construction trades, green technology, and more. This comes in addition to a previous \$1 million commitment to the Center as well as our \$14 million commitment in FY24 for the Howard Community College Mathematics and Athletic Complex to expand its facilities.

These thoughtful capital projects represent a much-needed investment for students of all ages. By establishing the community college facilities renewal grant, each campus can tackle systemic maintenance projects, extend the life of their current facilities, and build new ones. This necessary funding will provide equity in funding our community colleges which are the backbone of our community and a driver of economic growth.

As County Executive and a former educator, I understand firsthand the power of education and how it provides critical pathways to advancement. I am proud of the work that Howard Community College- one of the best colleges in the nation- has been able to achieve to create a highly skilled workforce. This grant will provide a strong return on investment on the critical infrastructure students need to excel in the classroom and beyond.

Expanding this grant to all 16 community colleges each year will help address the backlog of deferred maintenance and renovations needed to ensure these higher education institutions remain competitive. I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on House Bill 427.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball, EdD  
Howard County Executive