

**Testimony on Maryland Senate Bill 517**  
**Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program – Program Administrator – Alterations**

TO: Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Lisa Jones, First Generation College Bound Alum

DATE: February 14, 2024

Mr./Madam Chair and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer my testimony in support of altering the administrator of the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program to be the Maryland Higher Education Commission rather than the State Department of Education. As a First Generation College Bound (FGCB) alum who received college bound services to attend college and earn a degree, I advocate for access to information on financial aid sources available for low-income students to obtain Maryland State, Federal, and Institutional aid to make college affordable.

I am a 1994 graduate of Laurel High School who was the first in my family to attend college. With my parent's love and encouragement to seek higher education along with FGCB's blueprint to harness resources to help realize my college affordability, I am proud to hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Georgetown University and a Master of Public Health in Chronic Disease Epidemiology: Social Behavior Sciences from Yale University.

FGCB offered SAT/ACT exam preparation and Free Application for Federal Student Aid workshop services for me to build my confidence and mindset of becoming a prospective college student. FGCB also supported my sister with the same services and helped her with college admissions fees assistance. Such educational services FGCB provided are invaluable and I wish all high school students and their families are aware of and have the same advocate to promote a post-secondary educational path towards affordability.

I thank the Chair and Members of the Committee for hearing my testimony and I respectfully urge a favorable vote on SB517.