



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB517-2024 Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program -
Program Administrator – Alterations**

Since the establishment of the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program, or NGS, thousands of low-income high school students have received the resources and mentorship needed to reach success in post-secondary education. The program has been able to consistently reach students who qualify for a Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access Grant and/or free or reduced lunches by providing grants to non-profit organizations to assist students with education preparation. According to the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, a recipient of the grant given by NGS, the latter group has achieved many notable successes:

- 48% of seniors were accepted at colleges or universities.
- In total, \$3,752,595 was secured in scholarships and grants for all students. This averaged out to \$16,752.65 per student.
- 10th grade students who were a part of the program were noted to have excellent skills in credit earning, outperforming their peers by 24% while maintaining competitive grades.
- 11th grade students within the program increased their credit earning by 23%, with superior expertise in passing Mathematics by (+5%).
- Moving to 12th grade students, they excelled in passing English and Mathematics (+2% and +1%).
- 65% of all students in the program attended various financial aid/FASFA workshops.

To ensure the continuation and further success of the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program, it is critical to alter the administrator of the program from the Department of Education to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, or MHEC. MHEC is the state's higher education regulatory and coordinating board, that is responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities. MHEC oversees student tracking through the Maryland College Aid Processing System, or MDCAPS, which would be a major benefit to the NGS program. MDCAPS would ensure that no student is forgotten and receives the aid and resources they need through NGS. This was a major problem regarding NGS because with the system as is, there was little to no ability to track students who were enrolled in the program. Not being able to keep up with the students is a major disservice of the program because a critical aspect of NGS was the continuation of mentorship even after receiving an offer at a higher education institution.

Therefore, I am proposing SB517, which would amend the administrator of the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 517.