

KIPP:Forward

February 8th, 2024

To members of the Maryland Senate:

I am writing to advocate and support SB 517 outlining changes to the administration of the Next Generation Scholars program (NGS). KIPP has been recipient of NGS grant funding since its inception; it has provided essential funding to our organization in support of our work with first generation college students in Baltimore City.

I have worked at KIPP Baltimore in Maryland with college enrolled students for 10 years. In that time our organization has supported many students who receive funding from MHEC. This program has been instrumental in giving Maryland students access to higher education, while also providing a sustainable financial pathway to graduation. We at KIPP work closely with students and families to support FAFSA completion to qualify students for Federal and State Financial Aid. We partner with local high school counselors to assist students in completing the necessary document submission to receive this funding.

Since receiving support from the NGS program we have been able to expand our support to increase financial aid literacy and mentorship to our high school students and families. We have created a robust college and career program that starts in middle school and extends to college graduation and beyond.

We believe that altering the administration of the NGS program will allow for a smoother process for organizations and students alike. MHEC already has the operational knowledge and capacity to administer the Guaranteed Access Grant and we as counselors are already in communication with MHEC and familiar with their procedures and processes. This bill will decrease student barriers and increase organization's impact. We are grateful to congress for this vital investment in the future of Marylanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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