

**BENJAMIN BROOKS**  
*Legislative District 10*  
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee  
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal  
Service Program Workgroup



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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB543**  
**Institutions of Higher Education – Admissions Standards – Prohibition on**  
**Consideration of Legacy Preference**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
February 14, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB543, Institutions of Higher Education -Admissions Standards – Prohibition on Consideration of Legacy Preference. The purpose of this bill is to eliminate legacy preference admissions in any higher education institution that receives State funds.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action admission policies, it is more prevalent now than ever to address all favored treatment during our admissions. Legacy admissions gives preferential consideration for the children of alumni. Post this detrimental decision, President Biden, along with the Justice Department and Department of Education, offered guidance that would help higher education institutions “as they continue to pursue campuses that are racially diverse and that include students with a range of viewpoints, talents, backgrounds and experiences.” Further, that guidance noted, “colleges should reconsider whether policies such as preferences for children of previous graduates or children of donors run counter to the efforts to promote equal opportunities for all students.”

Many top universities in Maryland such as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland system do not use legacy preference in their admissions. Before eliminating legacy consideration, the incoming Johns Hopkins 2009 class had more students with legacy status than it had students who qualified for Pell grants. Today, those trends are reversed, with nearly one-fifth of students admitted to the University qualifying for Pell grants and just 3.5% having a legacy connection to the university.

Legacy consideration in college admissions is a practice from a different era and has no place in a democratic society that values, merit, hard work, and equity above all else. Furthermore, any higher education institution with a serious commitment to empowering those from disadvantaged backgrounds can clearly see how legacy preference gives an unfair advantage to privileged applicants at the expense of others. While many Maryland schools have already moved away from legacy consideration in their admissions, SB543 will ensure that no college receiving State funding undermines our Maryland’s core values.

For the sake of equity and fairness in the higher education admissions process, I am requesting a favorable report on SB543.

With kindest regards,

*Benjamin T. Brooks*

Benjamin Brooks