

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in favor of HB 0298.

My name is Dr. Anne Hofmann, and I am a Professor of English and the Chair of the English and Humanities Department at Frederick Community College. I was a parenting student who graduated with my PhD from The University of Maryland, College Park last Spring while raising 2 children as a single mother. It took me eight years, and I have received no targeted support for my degree completion in spite of the additional costs of childcare and added stressors of studying while simultaneously working full time as a community college professor and caring for 2 young children.

My research centers student caregivers in higher education and the overlapping power and precarity of their contributions to campuses across Maryland. I have presented nationally on the unique barriers student parents experience when trying to earn a degree while raising a family, and I have led research projects to distill the most important factors in helping families earn the credentials to make a living wage in our state. For those who are unfamiliar with the incredible cost of caregiving and attending college, I will share this powerful statistic: "Association of Community College Trustees notes that "Nearly 70 percent of two-year college students with dependents are living at or below 200 percent of poverty" (Gault et al 3).

For this large number of community college students, I testify today without hesitation that HB 0463 is the first step in helping hundreds of Maryland families earn the credentials to make a living wage in our state. Without the data that tells us which students and which institutions are serving parenting students, resourcing them is impossible. I'll add that this bill carries no fiscal note, yet the benefits it will provide for students and families in Maryland is profound. I urge the legislature to consider this bill essential to the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's

Future and as a necessary component for helping public colleges and universities support the students proven to be the most motivated to complete a degree: Student Parents.

NOTE: My testimony does not represent the opinion or viewpoint of Frederick Community College or their leadership, and my testimony is provided as a member of the public based on personal expertise or interest.