

Michaela Martin
micmaymar@gmail.com
(541) 905-1655

January 31, 2025

Delegate Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
Room 121
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Letter In Support of House Bill 0298 - Maryland Higher Education Commission –
Demographic Data Collection – Parental Status

Dear Delegate Ben Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Michaela Martin, JD, and I am an advocate for parenting students. As a student parent, I spearheaded the first legislation in the U.S. requiring higher education institutions in Oregon to collect data on students' parental status. Since then, other states have followed, recognizing the need for this critical information. It has been an honor to be part of this movement to make student parents visible in higher education policy. Currently, little to no data is collected within Maryland's higher education institutions on students' parental status, meaning that they are largely "invisible." The issue is that **when you are invisible, so are your problems.**

I know this firsthand, having been a parenting student throughout my entire college journey—from community college as a high school dropout to law school graduate. The lack of data on student parents makes it nearly impossible to address the barriers they face in earning a degree. I launched the effort for student parent data collection after discovering a two-year waitlist for on-campus childcare at my community college—longer than my time at the institution. While I had the privilege and blessing that my family was able to support my childcare needs, I wondered how many others couldn't access resources, how many didn't make it to graduation, and what could be done to support them. Without basic data on how many student parents are on campus or how many graduate, these questions remain unanswered.

HBo298 strengthens support for student parents by requiring higher education institutions to collect data on students' parental status. This essential step will help policymakers and institutions address barriers and improve college completion rates.

I urge the Appropriations Committee to support HBo298.

Please feel empowered to reach out with any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Michaela Martin

One Pager from Oregon Bill:

[Oregon Bill Public Testimony Document](#)

Oregon Senate Bill 564 (2021):

[Oregon Senate Bill 564 Overview](#)