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The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

Support Testimony for SB0715 - Student Service Hours - Financial Literacy Course

Hearing Date: March 07, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud Immigrant, Parent, Community advocate and resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I appreciate the opportunity to testify to and express my strong support for **Senate Bill 715**, which allows high school students to count financial literacy courses toward their required student service hours for graduation.

Financial literacy is not just a skill; it is a fundamental necessity for success in today's world. Every day, I work with individuals who struggle with basic financial concepts—budgeting, credit management, saving, and responsible borrowing—because they were never given the opportunity to learn these skills early in life. The consequences of this gap are significant, leading to cycles of debt, financial insecurity, and limited economic mobility.

SB0715 takes an important step in addressing this issue by integrating financial education into students' high school experience in a meaningful and incentivized way. By allowing financial literacy courses to count toward graduation requirements, this bill ensures that young people are equipped with the tools they need to make informed financial decisions from an early age.

This bill is particularly critical for the diverse communities, where financial literacy gaps are often more pronounced due to systemic barriers and a lack of accessible educational resources. When young people from these backgrounds receive financial education, they are better positioned to break generational cycles of financial instability, build wealth, and contribute positively to their communities.

Moreover, financial literacy education aligns with the intent behind student service hours—empowering students with knowledge that not only benefits them personally but also enables them to uplift their families and peers. An educated student can become a financially responsible adult, capable of making smart financial choices that benefit the broader economy.

I urge the committee to support SB0715 and prioritize financial literacy as an essential life skill for Maryland students. Providing this educational opportunity will prepare them for adulthood with confidence and the knowledge necessary to achieve financial independence and security.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0715.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Wambui

Financial Coach & Advocate for Economic Empowerment