

Favorable Testimony for HB 006

TO: Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Dr. Anne Hofmann

DATE: January 23, 2026

RE: SUPPORT – HB 006 – Maryland's Public Institutions of Higher Education - Pregnant and Parenting Students - Plan and Reporting

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in strong favor of HB 006.

My name is Dr. Anne Hofmann. I am a Professor of English and Cultural Studies at Frederick Community College. I am here today to urge your support for this legislation, which represents a refined and essential evolution in how Maryland supports its student parents.

Building on Momentum and Strengthening Accountability

Last year, this body saw the clear merit in this initiative when it passed the House and nearly cleared the Senate. While it was previously hung up on reporting logistics, we have spent the interim period ensuring this version is ready for implementation.

HB 006 is being reintroduced as a critical amendment to the Pregnant and Parenting Student Support Act of 2025. This version significantly expands what accountability looks like in our state through two vital enhancements:

1. **Universal Support:** It requires *all* public institutions to provide concrete supports for pregnant and parenting students, ensuring that a student's success doesn't depend on which zip code or campus they choose.
2. **Data-Driven Success:** it formalizes the data collection necessary to make these students "visible." As we often say in higher education: you cannot support student parents if you do not know who they are.

Resolving Past Challenges

We have addressed the concerns of the previous session by securing MHEC's support for this bill. We have clarified MHEC's role in ensuring that all data collection meets the highest ethical standards and includes rigorous privacy protections for our families. Furthermore, I want to emphasize that this bill carries no fiscal note. It is a profound policy improvement that provides massive benefits for Maryland families without a direct cost to the taxpayer.

The Human and Economic Impact

The data regarding this population is compelling. It is estimated that 20% of U.S. college students are parenting, and nearly 70% of those at two-year colleges live at or below 200% of poverty (Gault et al 3).

I understand this struggle personally. I earned my PhD at the University of Maryland, College Park, while raising two children as a single mother. It took eight years of navigating a system that offered no targeted support. My own PhD research now proves that while these students face immense financial and psychosocial stress, programmatic interventions—like FCC’s Parents Lead—result in completion rates that exceed the general college-going population. Parenting students are among our most motivated learners; they are working to improve their children’s lives, not just their own.

Conclusion

HB 006 is a necessary component for the successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. By identifying and supporting parenting students, we empower hundreds of Maryland families to earn the credentials required for a living wage.

I testify today without hesitation that this bill is a vital step for equity in our state, and I strongly urge a favorable report.

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