



March 10, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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Lt. Governor

Aruna Miller

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Chair Barnes, and members of the Appropriations Committee, The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 900 – Legislative Scholarship Programs - Eligibility and Use - Real Estate Appraisal Program.

We, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, strongly support **House Bill 900**, which seeks to modernize the eligibility and use of Maryland's legislative scholarship programs by including the **Practical Applications of Real Estate Appraisal (PAREA)** program. This legislation is a vital step toward diversifying the appraisal profession and removing the systemic barriers that have historically limited entry into this field.

The current path to becoming a licensed appraiser in Maryland is heavily dependent on a "who you know" model, requiring trainees to secure 1,000 to 1,500 hours of experience under a certified supervisor. Because the profession is largely self-employed, many appraisers are disincentivized to train potential future competitors. This bottleneck disproportionately impacts underrepresented communities and younger Marylanders who lack existing professional networks in the industry.

HB 900 addresses these challenges by:

- **Expanding Access to PAREA:** By authorizing the use of Senatorial and Delegate scholarships for PAREA registration and expenses, the State empowers students to utilize virtual, merit-based simulations to fulfill experience requirements.
- **Removing Gatekeeping Barriers:** Including PAREA in legislative scholarship eligibility allows students to complete the necessary experience to be eligible for licensure rather than their personal connections to existing supervisors.
- **Exempting Examination Hurdles:** The bill exempts applicants planning to complete PAREA from certain senatorial scholarship examination requirements, recognizing the technical and vocational nature of this specialized license.

Over the past several months, leadership from MHEC, the Maryland Real Estate Commission, and our community college system have worked collaboratively to build a "High School to Licensure" pipeline. HB 900 provides the necessary legislative framework to fund this pipeline through

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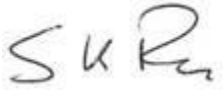
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existing resources, ensuring that Maryland leads the nation in creating an equitable and robust real estate appraisal workforce.

By supporting HB 900, we can ensure that a career in appraisal is accessible to all Marylanders, thereby strengthening our housing market and promoting economic equity in historically underserved neighborhoods.

I respectfully urge a **favorable report** on House Bill 900.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sanjay Rai in black ink.

Sanjay Rai, Secretary

Maryland Higher Education Commission