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## **HB 006– Maryland’s Institutions of Higher Education – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Plan and Reporting**

We return in Session 2026 with a modified version of this bill, which passed in the House of Delegates last year. During the Interim, educators and stakeholders have strengthened the bill’s support and implementation by securing support from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

College students who are parenting dependent children face unique challenges that have a profound impact on the rate of their successful completion of their degree programs.

Preliminary statistics suggest the following:

- Only about 33% of student parents earn a degree or certificate within six years of entering their program, as opposed to 54% of students who do not have children,
- More than half (52% of student parents leave without earning degrees,
- Despite challenges, student parents tend to have higher GPAs (around 3.0 or higher) than their peers who do not have children
- Many student parents take longer to graduate due to their other circumstances: part-time enrollment, and balancing work, school and childcare.

Maryland does not publicly provide specific graduation rates for college students with dependent children. However, understanding the broad educational landscape in Maryland can offer insight into the realities of pursuing an advanced degree while raising dependent children.

In the 2022-’23 academic year, the overall graduation rate for Maryland’s four-year cohort was 85.8%, a slight decrease from the 86.3% percent graduation rate in 2021-’22. Further, graduation rates vary among different student groups by race and ethnicity:

- Asian students had the highest graduation rate at 96.5 %,
- Caucasian students graduated at a rate of 93.5%
  
- Black/African-American students graduated at a rate of 84%
  
- Hispanic students graduated at a rate of 72.3%

While specific data on student parents in Maryland is unavailable, national trends suggest that only about 18% of student parents earn either an Associates or Bachelor's degree within six years of their matriculation, underscoring the challenges they face.

We may have theories about these demographics. However, it is crucial that institutions collect complete data to develop targeted programs that support student parents thereby improving their educational outcomes, and potentially their children's outcomes as well.

We respectfully request a favorable vote for HB 298.