



HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 534

NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS – TRANSCRIPTS – PROHIBITION ON PUNITIVE MEASURES RELATED TO STUDENT DEBT

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

OPPOSE

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of over 138,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

Tuition is a fundamental means by which nonpublic schools cover the numerous expenses required for proper maintenance and operation. For this reason, it may sometimes be necessary for a school to have the option of implementing certain punitive measures if a responsible party fails to fulfill the agreed-upon tuition payment. The tuition agreement between a parent or caregiver and the school is entered into voluntarily, with clear terms. If a parent or caregiver attempts to avoid or renege on their financial obligations, it is essential that the school has the ability to encourage them to meet their commitments.

Many of our schools operate under tight budgets, meaning that even small payments can significantly impact their financial stability. While our schools hold great respect for our parent community, it must be acknowledged that, on occasion, there will be those who attempt to renege on their contractual agreements. It is important that our schools retain their independence rather than taking away what is often the school's only resource to ensure that the money owed to them is paid. House Bill 534 would remove this resource.

We therefore respectfully request an UNFAVORABLE report on House Bill 534.

Thank you.