



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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February 18, 2026

Chair Jheanelle Wilkins
Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 534 - Nonpublic Schools - Transcripts - Prohibition on Punitive Measures Related to Student Debt. The bill permits nonpublic schools that receive state funding to issue student transcripts and prohibits schools from penalizing students solely due to outstanding financial obligations owed by the student or their family. House Bill 534 is essential, as students may lose the opportunity to enroll in a new school, miss scholarships or college opportunities, and stall their academic progress. **This bill is a 2026 legislative priority for the Black Caucus.**

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland believes HB 534 expands educational opportunity by ensuring that financial challenges do not limit a student's ability to learn, progress, or access academic records essential to their future.

Additionally, House Bill 534 does not forgive debts or prevent schools from collecting their payment, but it allows students to stay on track for their education without being penalized. For example, a 10th grader who attended a Catholic private school had to repeat the 10th grade due to an outstanding balance, and couldn't afford to settle herself due to financial hardships at home. She later had to transfer schools during the second week of classes and faced an unsuccessful battle to obtain her transcripts and official school documents, which impacted her GPA and athletic eligibility. HB 534 will help students avoid losing academic progress or future opportunities due to financial issues.

Ultimately, House Bill 534 ensures that students can access their transcripts and continue their education without being punished for debts they did not create, while still allowing schools to pursue payment from families through other lawful means.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports House Bill 534.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland