

Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee
HB 469 : Institutions of Postsecondary Education – Disorderly School Closures
Position: Favorable

February 18, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tyrone Holloway. I'm 28 year old and I'm an Assistant Manager at Amazon here in Baltimore, MD.

I'm writing today in support of bill HB 469 which will define what an orderly school closure is; prohibit a closing school from not properly notifying students of its closure and failing to obtain transfer agreements; prevent an institution from collecting on student debt; and holds executive officers personally liable for disorderly closures.

First let me tell you about myself. I come from a single parent home. My mother tried her best to take care of me and my siblings. Moving from house to house, or shelter to shelter, was something I was no stranger to. I always told myself that I would make something of myself to help my family escape poverty. I am the first one of my immediate family to graduate high school and want to go to college and be something other than a drug dealer. This was difficult at first because I had to get a job after high school to help support my family. I finally got to a place where I could help support my family and go to school to support my education. I started going to a for-profit college called 'ACE'. I was on High Honors at this school with a 3.9 GPA and was 6 months in on a 9 month program to be a Medical Assistant. One day I was on my way to class and Federal Agents showed up and escorted everyone out of the building and told us my school is shut down and we will no longer have classes there. Years later I am still on the phone with creditors trying to explain that ACE closed down and I shouldn't have to pay for an education I didn't receive. I have loans for that school still on my credit affecting my credit score and future school loans.

After dealing with all of this I mustered up the courage to go back to school. I signed up to get my Criminal Justice degree from then known as "TESST College of Technology." The school promised my dreams they could not possibly help achieve. I graduated with my Associates degree in Criminal Justice in 2015. Two months later the school was sold to another Institution called "Brightwood College." This made it difficult to get my previous transcripts or to receive any future help with jobs or recommendation letters. Fast forward 2 years later and Brightwood College closed down with short notice. Which in turn made it nearly impossible to get any information from when I attended TESST College. What was not clearly explained when I attended TESST was how much I would have to ultimately pay for just an Associates degree. I currently owe \$33,000 in federal school loans and I am currently getting 15% of my wages garnished because of those loans. This is also currently stopping me from attending University of Baltimore where I was studying Forensic Science with a 3.8 GPA. I was told I couldn't attend the university because my loans were in default and I had to pay \$33,000 in full or I could not receive any federal loans to attend school.

I hope you take this opportunity to protect all Maryland students from experiencing an abrupt school closure. I urge you to move favorably on HB 469.

Best,
Tyrone Holloway