

**TESTIMONY OF VERNON BROWNLEE
ASSOCIATE, FRANKLIN AND PROKOPIK P.C, OF LAW, 2012 ANGELOS
SCHOLAR, AND 2016 GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE
SCHOOL OF LAW
IN SUPPORT OF SB 435**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
MARYLAND STATE SENATE**

Feb. 12, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Vernon Brownlee, a 2012 Fannie Angelos Scholar, a University of Baltimore School of Law graduate, and an attorney for Franklin and Propopik in Baltimore. I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak with you today to share my personal experience with this outstanding program.

During my sophomore year at Bowie State University, I decided that I wanted to become a lawyer. However, I had no idea how to make my dream a reality. I did not know any lawyers or anyone who ever went to law school. And if I did, I could never afford the six-figure loan of attending law school.

The following year, I spoke with Bowie Professor Judith Fitzgerald who told me about the Fannie Angelos Program. She said that it would pay for my legal education if I could demonstrate academic excellence. It was at this moment, I realized that my dream of obtaining a law degree could be possible after all. I didn't realize how much else the Program would give me. The connections I made in this Program have been simply priceless. The relationships I forged with judges, lawyers, and other mentors, help instill me with the confidence, know-how, and expertise to excel.

Thanks in large measure to the support of faculty and staff in the Program, I graduated from University of Baltimore School of Law with honors in 2016. After graduation, I became one of the youngest black Assistant States Attorney's for Prince George's County. In this position, I managed large-volume dockets, misdemeanor criminal cases, and high-profile cases, and tried multiple jury trials and District Court cases.

My legal journey has brought me back to Bowie State University, where I serve as an adjunct professor. Twice a week, I get to inspire a room of young and talented students who remind me of me, looking for an opportunity to fulfill their dream. They frequently ask, "How did you go to law school?" And I proudly respond, "Let me tell you about the Fannie Angelos Program."

By passing this bill, you will help give future generations of HBCU students the opportunity to realize their dreams. I can tell you from personal experience that you will be helping not only those individuals, but their families and the communities they live in.