

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 435 – Legal Education Success Collaborative – Established – Letter of Support

My name is Rhonda Scott. I am a proud graduate of Coppin State University, class of 2013 and the University of Baltimore School of Law, class of 2018. I am also a Fannie Angelos Program Alumna. I am honored to have this opportunity to testify to the astounding impact this program has had on my career and my life. This program afforded me a second chance at fulfilling my dream.

I am a 48-year old licensed attorney and registered nurse but my story is not uncommon. I became a mom at 17 and by the time I was 19, I had given birth to my second daughter. Since the age of 10, I dreamed of becoming an attorney, but that dream was far-removed with two daughters to raise. I was forced to quit the pre-law program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and enrolled in a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Program. This was my assurance that I would be able to provide for my daughters.

After 13 years of being an LPN, I returned to school and became a registered nurse. In 2013 while studying at Coppin to get my Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, I learned about the Fannie Angelos program. In an instant I thought that this was my second chance. Despite the fact that I had always been a straight A student, the decision to apply did not come without much hesitation and downright fear. I had been a nurse for 22 years and I was set in my ways. But, it had to be more than a coincidence that I would finally check my email only a few days before the application deadline. And, it had to be more than a coincidence that I would not check my email again until the day of the deadline to accept the spot in the program.

Even as a working adult, the guidance, support and mentorship was critical to my success. I started law school with stifling insecurities about my age and working full time. I had convinced myself that I was going to fail. But it was more than the academic support that aided my success. It was the sincerity of it all; the availability of the professors in the program, the time, the honesty, the keeping it real that made me realize that failure was not an option.

It is my firm belief that without this program, I would not have made it through law school. This program afforded me the opportunity to help change the narrative of my life. I feel like I am truly able to combine my experience as a nurse and my law license to make a difference in healthcare where I feel it matters most. I am now the Deputy Director for the Maryland Board of Nursing and because of my law degree, I am more prepared to advocate for the protection of the public.

For the reasons discussed above, I submit this letter of support for SB 435.