

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0610

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BILL NO.: **SB 610**

TITLE: **Community Colleges – Supplemental Services and Supports for Students With Disabilities Grant Program**

SPONSOR: **Senator King**

COMMITTEE: **Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 12, 2020**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** SB 610 – Community Colleges – Supplemental Services and Supports for Students With Disabilities Grant Program. Under this proposed legislation, the governor would include \$2.5 million in the annual budget bill as a general fund appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education, creating a grant program with specific guidelines for students with disabilities in community colleges.

A majority of young people with disabilities are capable of succeeding in higher education, and yet many find themselves facing barriers that their peers often do not. One of these barriers is financial. People with disabilities are still more likely to be unemployed, lose jobs, and be in low-wage work than their non-disabled peers, a problem further compounded by institutionalized racism and sexism. With this grant, students could provide documentation from a licensed medical professional and then receive assistance.

The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) currently incurs nearly \$1million in costs to support disable populations. The cost of delivering support structures to students with disabilities is very high, and SB 610 offers a welcome source of support.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 610. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.

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Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

TESTIMONY

Submitted by Dr. Bernard J. Sadusky, Executive Director
bsadusky@mdacc.org

February 12, 2020

BILL: SB 610 Community Colleges – Supplemental Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities Grant Program

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges representing Maryland's 16 community colleges fully supports SB 610. Maryland's community colleges are open access institutions experiencing a growing diversity of students including students with physical and intellectual disabilities. Our colleges welcome this increasing diversity and have attempted to provide the supplementary support services necessary for a successful fulfilling experience on our campuses.

The range of services which include sign language assistants, tutorial services, autistic assistants, vary by need of the individual. This also requires awareness training for college personnel as we support these populations. The cost last fiscal year for these services at all community colleges was \$5.7 million.

Unlike the K-12 education sector, community colleges have no fiscal source for providing these services. These individuals not only need these supplemental services, but also have become dependent on them, having had them provided in their previous educational experiences.

Funding for SB 610 is an investment in the future of disabled students and Maryland's economy, because the skills they acquire at our community colleges will allow them to become contributing members of our society. This is an investment worth making.

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Maryland Community College Chief Student Affairs Officers

An affinity group of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Senate Bill 610

Supporting Testimony with Amendments

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Community College Chief Student Affairs Officers

Dr. Bryan Newton
Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services
Wor-Wic Community College
February 12, 2020

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 610, a bill to support students with disabilities at Maryland's community colleges, and to offer amendments. Thanks to the sponsors of this bill for your concern about students with disabilities, and for all the support you provide to Maryland's community colleges.

I serve as the chairperson for the Maryland Community College Chief Student Affairs Officers Affinity Group, the higher education officers that are in part responsible for making sure that students with disabilities receive a quality education and the services and support they need to be successful. Each of us witnesses the struggles that these students work through to succeed in college, and we take pride in seeing many students with disabilities complete their educational goals each year.

The February 2019 Maryland Higher Education Commission report on Students with Disabilities at Maryland Colleges and Universities states that 7,837 students with a disability attended Maryland's 16 community colleges in fiscal year 2017. This amount is 52.6% of all undergraduate students with disabilities at Maryland's public four-year institutions, state-aided independent institutions and community colleges.

Community colleges are clearly a place that students with disabilities choose to start their college education. At my small community college on the Lower Eastern Shore, Wor-Wic Community College, we have 94 students with disabilities this year pursuing their dream of a college degree. At our 2019 commencement ceremony, Samantha Davis, a student with autism gave the commencement address for her class. Samantha graduated with a degree in our hotel-motel-restaurant program and has dreams of opening her own bakery. During her commencement address she was profuse in her thanks of our disability services counselor and the support that she received at Wor-Wic in order to complete her degree. Samantha is just one example of the successes our community colleges produce when working with students that require assistance to complete their education.

Supporting students as they complete their higher education objectives is rewarding, but it comes with a cost to community colleges. While community colleges do not create Individualized Education Plans for students with disabilities like those required in secondary schools, we must provide students with disabilities reasonable accommodations to assist them in their education. Reasonable accommodations are unique to each student and their disability.

In addition, each community college staffs an office of employees to provide reasonable accommodations to these students and to help them overcome barriers to success during their time with us. The cost for meeting the needs of students with disabilities at Maryland's community colleges totals over \$5.3 million annually. This amount does not include funds spent by our institutions to provide state-mandated tuition waivers for students with disabilities.

This important legislation would provide a grant program of \$2.5 million in the state's annual budget to help community colleges meet the needs of students with disabilities. The General Assembly enacted legislation in 2006 requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to establish a grant fund for community colleges to support students with disabilities. There has been no funding since fiscal year 2009, and in the decade since then the number of students and the support needed to ensure their success has grown.

The Maryland Community College Chief Students Affairs Officers suggest two amendments to help make the bill as helpful as possible for all students with disabilities:

AMENDMENT 1

On page 2, beginning with line 8 amend the section by adding the following:

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL. STUDENTS CAN ALSO PROVIDE THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN FROM THEIR SECONDARY SCHOOL AS DOCUMENTATION.

AMENDMENT 2

On page 2, beginning with line 16 amend the section by adding the following:

STUDENTS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, COSTS OF SIGN LANGUAGE, INTERPRETERS, READERS,

Amendment 1 ensures that students do not have to expend additional funds to have a licensed physician or mental health professional verify their disability when it has already been verified as part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) during high school. Several community colleges use the IEP to verify that a student has a disability. Amendment 2 ensures that limits are not placed on the types of accommodations that can be reimbursed. Each situation that our disability services offices encounter is unique, and there may be a need for accommodations that do not meet the articulated list in lines 15-18 of the bill.

Assisting community colleges with support services that we are required to provide would greatly enhance our ability to serve these students. Students with disabilities are choosing community colleges to start their education because we provide a small, student-centered environment that helps all students overcome barriers to educational success. As the leading provider of higher education services to students with disabilities in Maryland, it is vital that we have the resources to meet the needs of this growing population. I urge a favorable report of this bill so that community colleges can effectively support our citizens with disabilities as they strive to complete their education and become part of Maryland's workforce.

MGA_SenatorKing_FAV_SB0610

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 610 – Community Colleges –
Supplemental Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities Grant Program**

February 12, 2020

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

In 2006 the Legislature passed a bill which created a Grant Program for Community Colleges to be used for supplemental services and supports for students with disabilities. This grant program was designed to help Community Colleges with the cost of services that are provided to students with disabilities. Some of these services include:

- Sign Language Interpreters
- Readers or conversion of printed materials to Braille
- Tutors
- Note Takers
- Software for students with disabilities

In addition, there are costs for staffing and supporting the Disabilities Offices in each Community College.

In 2017 there were 7,837 students with disabilities attending Maryland Community Colleges. The cost for those services was \$5.4 million. The grant that was established to cover these costs has not been funded since fiscal year 2009 and the amount funded in that year was \$199,000.

Senate Bill 610 will require, that beginning in Fiscal Year 2022, the Governor must include an appropriation of at least \$2,500,000 to the Higher Education Commission in order to fund the Grant Program for Supplemental Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities in Community Colleges. While this amount will cover less than half of the cost of services, it will provide our Community Colleges with some relief for the expenses related to these important services that are required by law.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 610.

DBM_Barb Wilkins_INFO_SB610

Uploaded by: Wilkins, Barbara

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 610 Community Colleges-Supplemental Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities Grant Program (King, et al)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: February 12, 2020

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs and Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

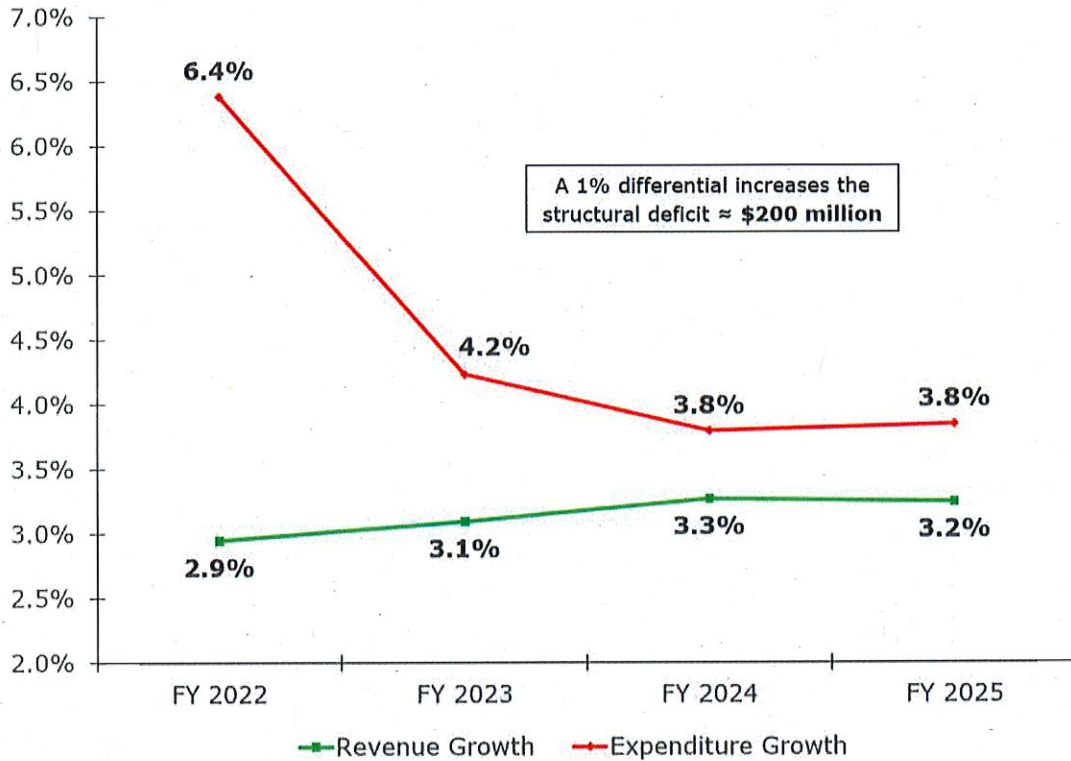
SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 610 mandates an annual appropriation of at least \$2.5 million to the Maryland Higher Education Commission to be used for grant awards for supplemental services and supports for community college students with disabilities, including costs of sign language interpreters, readers, converting course materials for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, tutors, note-takers, and specialized software.

EXPLANATION: DBM's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on whether the aggregate increased spending is sustainable when spending growth continues to exceed revenue growth.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and strives to create a structurally balanced budget, in which the growth in spending is less than the growth in revenues. Actions by the General Assembly to mandate spending levels makes it exceedingly difficult for the Administration to achieve structural balance.

The FY 2022 General Fund forecast shows spending growth of 6.4%, whereas revenue growth is forecast to be 2.9%. Growth in State spending will outpace otherwise healthy revenue growth not only next year, but also for the foreseeable future. The result is a short and long-term structural gap that will continue to strain State resources until the underlying causes have been resolved.

Future Spending Outpaces Revenue Growth



Source: Department of Budget and Management, FY 2021 Budget Highlights Book, Appendix F (January 2020)

General Fund Budget Outlook Fiscal 2022 - 2025

| | Est. 2022 | Est. 2023 | Est. 2024 | Est. 2025 |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Cash Balance | -\$833 | -\$1,135 | -\$1,201 | -\$1,298 |
| Structural Balance | -\$701 | -\$905 | -\$984 | -\$1,071 |

Department of Legislative Services, January 2020 Fiscal Briefing

For FY 22 – FY 25, the cumulative impact of an ongoing imbalance between spending and revenues is a \$3.6 billion structural gap. Our structural budget problem reflects a spending problem; not a revenue problem.

The ever-increasing use of mandates and entitlement spending by the General Assembly is a more recent practice, making the State's structural budget deficit a chronic challenge. According to the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), 70.2% of the FY 2020 General Fund allowance is mandated or entitlement spending.

Until we achieve long-term structural balance, programs cannot rely on a consistent funding level. Constituencies for these proposed programs or enhanced spending bills should be forewarned that passage

of this legislation does not guarantee future funding. Whatever specific funding is mandated will likely be repealed or otherwise modified in a subsequent Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) – this action is necessary to ensure a constitutionally required balanced budget in the next fiscal year.

The Administration is cognizant of the downside risks facing our economy and, in the FY 2021 Budget, has set aside \$1.3 billion in reserves. The Rainy Day Fund balance is equal to 6.25% of revenues, \$48 million more than recommended by the Spending Affordability Committee (SAC). Moody's Analytics has recently advised of a slowdown in employment growth in the latter part of FY 2021, which DLS estimates would add \$241 million to the structural budget gap in FY 2021 and \$419 million in FY 2022. Historic increases in funding for both K-12 education, as proposed by the Kirwan Commission, and school construction will further aggravate the budget gap.

The 2019 SAC commentary encourages a cautious fiscal approach -- **“Out-year fiscal stress is anticipated despite the expectation that personal income and employment will continue to grow steadily, and entitlement and prison caseloads will hold steady or decline. An imbalance is forecast before accounting for any recommendations from the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.”**

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at
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