



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

**Testimony to the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee  
SB 767: Higher Education - Admissions Process - Criminal History  
Position: Favorable**

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair  
Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

MCRC is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances financial justice and economic inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are writing today in support of bill SB 767, which would repeal higher education institutions use of third-party admission applications that ask about criminal history and prohibit the use of college applications that have questions about student applicants' criminal history.

MCRC works on college accessibility and affordability issues. Asking about criminal history on college applications can pose a significant barrier to accessing and paying for higher education.

In 2017, the Brookings Institution released a report on the use of criminal history on college applications and found that "it is common for institutions to ask about any type of conviction, including misdemeanors and even juvenile adjudications, without any time limitation."<sup>1</sup>

Higher education has become increasingly necessary for employment and higher wages. The importance of a college education, use of criminal history in college admissions, along with the mass incarceration of among young men of color (particularly Black men), is very concerning.

SB 767 would reduce barriers to postsecondary education for students with criminal records. We urge you to move favorably on SB 767.

Sincerely,

Dariya Brown  
Student Rights Program Manager

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/thinking-beyond-the-box-the-use-of-criminal-records-in-college-admissions/>