



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 92 – Sales Tax Exemption for College Textbooks

SPONSOR: Delegate Long

HEARING DATE: February 4, 2020

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 92** which establishes a tax-free period for the purchase of college textbooks. This is not new legislation, but the issue remains the same – the high cost of textbooks can be a barrier for many students and particularly for those at community colleges.

Prince George's Community College recognizes that this tax exemption is a low-cost way to help all students with the increasing cost of postsecondary education and training. Although community college faculty and staff work hard to minimize the cost of textbooks through expanded use of Open Education Resources, we recognize not all course material is available in digital format and that many courses require proprietary materials. However, the increasing cost of textbooks and the increasing cost of education can impact a students' ability to pursue postsecondary education.

The release of any financial burden on the total cost of education supports students' desires to further their studies. The impact of the loss of any revenue associated with sales tax is minimal compared to the contributions made by students to the tax base of the state and county.

In addition, the provisions of this bill would bring Maryland into line with neighboring states New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. This change will also enable our campus bookstores to compete more favorably with online textbook vendors.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 92** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.