

JARED SOLOMON
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee
Subcommittees

Education and Economic Development
Oversight Committee on Personnel



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 222
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130
Fax 301-858-3233 · 410-841-3233
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 460 Higher Education – Transfer With Success Act

House Appropriations Committee

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Good afternoon Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, Esteemed Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to present today on my legislation – the Transfer with Success Act. It's an honor to serve on this committee and to be before you this afternoon.

Many young people in our state, particularly low-income and first generation students, rely on community college as their first step to a rewarding future. According to the Community College Research Center at Columbia University, about 80% of entering community college students nationwide indicate that they want to earn a bachelor's degree or higher. And recent data showed the number of students in Maryland transferring into the USM with an associate's degree has nearly doubled in the last decade.

To ensure their success, there must be an effective, transparent process allowing students to seamlessly transfer from one institution to another. All too often students face unnecessary barriers and undue financial hardship when their community college credits are inexplicitly denied as they attempt to transfer to our four year public institutions. Faced with increasing debt and the loss of momentum, many students abandon their educational dreams – a loss to the student as well as our state.

The challenges facing transfer students are well documented:

- Nearly 40% of students received no college transfer credit, losing an average of 27 credits a piece, or almost a full year of college.
- As of 2014, 36 states had policies ensuring that students who earn an associate's degree will be able to transfer all of the credits related to their degree and enter with junior standing when they transfer to an in-state public 4-year institution, and 35 states had implemented a transferrable common core of lower-division courses that must be accepted by all public institutions in the state.

- According to a July 2020 report by the National Center for Education Statistics, for students who begin their college career at a public two-year institution, 96.2% attempted to transfer credits. Of those students, nearly half were not able to transfer some or all of their credits. Maryland's data is likely very similar.
- Complete College America estimates that every two courses per degree recipient for which the credits fail to transfer cost families and taxpayers a total of \$600 million.

The proposed legislation provides for transparency in the transfer process by requiring the receiving institution (where the student is transferring to) to specify the reasons for any denial of credits or courses. This information will allow students transferring to another public institution to enroll in courses where the student knows that earned credits will be accepted. Equally important is that the transparency required by this legislation will provide community colleges (*the transfer institution*) with the information required to amend or restructure its course requirements and curricula to ensure future credits will be accepted.

Presently, there is no institutional data collected that specifies why credits or courses are not acceptable to the receiving institution. This legislation also requires that institutions forward this information to the Maryland Higher Education Commission for its evaluation and consideration in developing statewide policy.

As I previously stated, the transparency required by the legislation will benefit students. It will reduce the State's cost sharing burden for our public institutions and it will provide our community colleges with needed information to amend their current curricula and instruction to facilitate better credit transfer. The "protection" of transparency in credit acceptance decisions will benefit students, taxpayers, and our state institutions.

This legislation passed this Committee last session 17-0 and the full House 132-0. Because of COVID-19, it was never considered in the Senate. This issue was also highlighted in the *DLS 2021 Legislative Session Issue Papers*, which endorsed the solutions proposed in this legislation. I urge you once again to provide a favorable report on HB 460.