



## **House Appropriations Committee**

**April 1, 2021**

**Testimony submitted by:**

**Dr. Brad Phillips, Deputy Executive Director**

### **SB 308 – Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship - Eligibility**

#### **Favorable with Amendment**

As amended, SB 308 has the potential of diluting valuable scholarship dollars by deleting the sections of the Community College Promise Scholarship Program that require a student to attend their local area community college unless the program is not available. Tuition for students residing in the jurisdiction that a community college serves pay an average cost of \$4,324; however, for the student to attend a community college outside their service area the average cost increases to \$7,255. Should the student choose to enter a program of study not offered by their local area community college, they can take advantage of current laws that permits a student to enter statewide programs for the in-county tuition rate.

To maintain cost-efficiency and to serve as many students as possible with the funds available, community colleges ask that the Committee reinstate the requirement that students taking advantage of the Promise Program attend the community college located in the county or region where the applicant lives unless the program is unavailable. The following amendments will reinsert the language needed to maintain a cost-efficient program:

- 1) Eliminate the brackets that begin on page 2, lines 13 and end at line 20. This reinstates the requirement that a student attend the college that serves their place of residence, unless the program is not available, and/or**
- 2) Reinstate the language that the current amendments eliminate beginning of page 3, Section ( C ) (1) through (3) lines 19-29.**

In addition, we have been informed that the Maryland Higher Education Commission will need to develop a separate application form for Community College Promise candidates that is separate from the FASFA that is currently being used to verify eligibility for the program. Students, high school counselors, and postsecondary faculty and staff are not aware that a new process will need to be put in place to address SB 308.