

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

February 3, 2021

TESTIMONY

Submitted by
Dr. Falecia Williams, President

HB 216 – Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports

Position: Favorable

As the President of Prince George's Community College ("PGCC"), we strongly support HB216 which will streamline the process to allow tuition exemptions for foster and homeless youth across all jurisdictions in Maryland. The changes noted in HB216 to Maryland's existing tuition waiver for foster care recipients and unaccompanied homeless youth (codified at Md. Code § 15-106.1), ensures that tuition waivers fulfill its promise to provide a pathway for foster and homeless youth.

Tuition exemptions for foster care recipients and homeless youth provide life altering opportunities to many high school graduates through their pursuit of post-secondary education for degree completion, licensure, and/or skill certification. This pursuit constitutes a material benefit to these students and our state. Taking full advantage of the available assistance will also allow these students to complete their pursuit of a college degree or enhanced skill credentials which provide a sustainable living wage.

Our collective goal is to provide opportunity and access for every Maryland student to pursue their higher education goals. It is of the utmost importance to ensure that these students have the opportunity to take advantage of financial assistance. Every financial resource available to assist our students' path to postsecondary education that leads to degree completion or workforce skill enhancement is essential.

In conclusion, this proposed legislation benefits both Maryland and our students. This legislation will make a difference.

Sincerely,



Falecia D. Williams, Ed.D.
President
Prince George's Community College