

To the Committee on Budget and Taxation,

Hello, my name is Michael Williams, I am 22 years old, and I am in my second semester here at the University of Maryland, College Park. I graduated from Anne Arundel Community College in the fall of 2019 and then transferred to the University of Maryland in the fall of 2020. The pandemic has made many of our lives much more difficult than before. This is especially the case for myself, both of my parents are older, my father is going to be 70 in the spring and my mother will be 69 in the summer, both also have multiple underlying health conditions. Making my parents have a much higher risk if infected by COVID-19. To prevent any possible contact with the virus, I have stopped working these past couple months. This has made money very tight on top of bills, tuition, and even books. Many students, just like myself, are claimed as dependent by our parents, meaning we were not eligible for a stimulus check, and do not qualify for unemployment. Those that cannot afford expensive textbooks are at a huge disadvantage. Through past experiences, it is much more difficult to perform in class without the correct resources, textbooks aren't always online or in our libraries. Until my entire family, including myself are vaccinated money will be hard to come by. Making textbooks tax exempt would play a monumental role in the lives of students attending school now. Every single dollar truly counts for students right now, and this would put some of those dollars back into hard working students' pockets. Please vote in favor of SB904.