



Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Testimony: SB 538 – Community College Tuition and Residency Waivers – Funding

Testimony Submitted by: Dr. Kathleen Hetherington, President, Howard Community College

Position: Support

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about Senate Bill 538. I appreciate Senator Guzzone's leadership to provide fiscal relief to Maryland's community colleges that collectively waive millions of dollars each year in state-mandated tuition and residency waivers.

While the waivers represent a commendable effort to assist various categories of students, the unintended consequence is that the loss of tuition revenue must be made up elsewhere. SB 538 would help to provide assistance to offset some of the costs that colleges are incurring, and in turn, other students are paying, because lost revenues must be partially covered by tuition increases. In fiscal year 2018, the total cost of state-mandated waivers to HCC was \$530,116 and in fiscal year 2019, the amount was \$479,779.

One of the waivers that results in a highest amount of lost revenue at Howard Community College is the tuition waiver for senior citizens taking courses. The cost at HCC for fiscal year 2018 was \$201,342 and for fiscal year 2019 was \$288,019. Howard County has one of the fastest growing aging populations in the state of Maryland and the senior citizen waiver costs will only accelerate in the years ahead. I want to reiterate that offering this benefit to senior citizens is a worthy cause, but it has an impact on other students, particularly needy students who feel the impact of any tuition increase. At HCC, which enrolls over 26,600 credit and noncredit students annually, 44 percent of the fall 2020 credit students received financial aid, some of it in the form of loans. This bill would help colleges cover the cost of some of the waivers, thereby giving relief to other students who shoulder this expense.

I commend Senator Guzzone for developing a creative and innovative remedy for aiding community colleges and their students. By supporting community colleges through this bill, Marylanders will be able to have a high-quality, affordable, locally provided postsecondary education that meets the workforce needs of now and into the future. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the committee and for your continued support of Maryland's community colleges.