

The University of Maryland Student Government Association

Testimony for SB886

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021

Transfer With Success Act

Position: Favorable

My name is Ashalee Brown. I am a student at the University of Maryland and one of the transfer representatives in the Student Government Association. I would like to start off by thanking the hardworking members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for considering my testimony, and Senator Elfreth for sponsoring this important bill, which will support transfer students during their transfer process to four-year institutions.

It is a known fact that every year, transfer students face difficulties when leaving their home institutions to reside permanently at another. For multiple reasons, this is one of the most stressful processes for students, especially those who are not familiar with the higher education processes at larger institutions or even familiar with the United States education system itself. I speak from the position of being both a recent transfer student from Montgomery College to the University of Maryland, College Park and a newly introduced student to the American education system, having recently emigrated from Jamaica. Like many other institutions, Montgomery College has a transfer alliance with the University of Maryland that permits qualified students to be automatically accepted to the university. Given its closeness in proximity and the prestigious nature of UMD, many Montgomery College students, like myself, take this route.

Before transferring, my peers and I at Montgomery College were advised to take as many upper-level courses that we can at the community college level as we would have more access to help and smaller class sizes. However, once we got to orientation at UMD, we were told the opposite. The University requires students to re-do upper-level courses that were taken at another institution (regardless of the existence of a transfer alliance), as the curriculums are different and independent of one another. Essentially, students have to repay and dedicate additional hours to learning the same material at a different institution without a thorough explanation of the denial of their coursework and credits. This happened to me and to many other transfer students who have been forced to make changes to their degree plans to accommodate courses that they have already taken.

It is my aspiration to have a better communication system between institutions and students when it comes to detailed explanations behind the denial of their coursework. This bill will require institutions to present this explanation and, in turn, will lead to future examples and advice for transfer students choosing coursework at their home institutions. I urge the committee to give a favorable report to the Transfer with Success Act.

Kind regards,

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*Dan Alpert, Student Body President*

*Ben Baitman, Director of Government Affairs*