

**SB0308 -- 01.27.21--Comm college Promise Scholarsh**

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Position: FAV



# POSITION STATEMENT

## TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### SENATE BILL 308 - Higher Education – Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship - Revisions

**Sponsor: Senator Ellis**

**January 27, 2021**

**DONALD C. FRY  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

#### **Position: Support**

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 308, which would allow the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship to be used by individuals who enroll in a non-credit continuing education course focused on entrepreneurial activities or career development, or who enroll in a course because they have been laid off from their job through no fault of their own. The bill also exempts these individuals from the grade point average required to maintain the scholarship.

The GBC recently released *Preparing for the Future: A Regional Workforce Development Initiative*, which makes a series of recommendations to strengthen and enhance future workforce development activities. Among the recommendations in the report is the need to provide more funding for non-degree training programs. Expanding the Promise Scholarship to additional programs is a move in the right direction.

In addition, the GBC's *2021 Legislative Priorities* calls on the Maryland General Assembly to allocate additional state funds for adult basic education and workforce training. Senate Bill 308 is consistent with that priority and provides an additional resource for Maryland adults who are trying to find new careers in this rapidly changing economy.

**For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 308.**

*The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 66-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.*

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

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# **CSM SB308 Promise Testimony.pdf**

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## HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

January 27, 2021

### TESTIMONY

Submitted by  
Dr. Maureen Murphy, President

#### SB308: Higher Education Maryland Community College Promise Program-Revisions

#### Position: Favorable

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While Maryland's College Promise has had a rocky start, it now provides a critical foundation to Maryland's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Originally, the 2018 Maryland Community College Promise program that called for an annual allocation of \$15 million to provide grants to full-time students attending one of Maryland's 16 community colleges. It was later expanded to include students in non-credit programs of study that lead to licensure or certification and registered apprenticeships. Initial participation was low due to unclear guidelines, but we have since learned better implementation strategies. Unfortunately, FY21 budget reductions left thousands of eligible Maryland students on a waiting list.

SB308 recognizes the reality of the Covid-19 pandemic on our most vulnerable populations. Lower-income, working adults, and student parents have been hit hardest, which forces them to make the difficult choice of stopping out or dropping out of college. Even more distressing is that many of those who have lost work during the pandemic are canceling their college plans altogether. Now, more than ever, these individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own need what the Promise program can give them to help recover.

While the Governor's Budget has restored the original \$15 million allocation, this legislation, SB308, adds an additional \$3.5 million, a strategic investment in the road to recovery from the pandemic. Further, the elimination of the GPA requirement for those need-based students pursuing non-credit courses of study expands the eligibility for many unemployed adults who are unemployed due to the pandemic and need to be re-tooled in one of the many short-term training workforce programs that lead to licensure or certification. At the College of Southern Maryland, those programs include skilled trades and welding, high demand health careers such as Certified Nursing Assistant, commercial truck driving, and many more.

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This is a timely bill in that it expands the eligibility to many adults who find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own. For many of these individuals, their previous livelihoods will not be returning, and SB308 provides them with a lifeline. The powerful message of Maryland's College Promise program is that college is for everyone, that the State of Maryland supports the economic and social mobility of all its citizens. This message matters most to the students for whom college has not been an expectation.

As we emerge from this pandemic, we must continue to invest in our people if we are to see a full recovery from COVID-19. I urge you to support SB308 to expand the eligibility for a Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship for those most vulnerable individuals, who are unemployed or laid off through no fault of their own.

# **SB 308 Promise Scholarship (Ellis) B&T 1.27.21 (1)**

Uploaded by: Wilkins, Barbara

Position: INFO



# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

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## **SENATE BILL 308 Higher Education - Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship - Revisions (Ellis)**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE: January 27, 2021**

**COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 308 mandates an appropriation in FY 2023 of \$3.5 million in addition to the current FY 2023 mandate of \$15 million for the Community College Promise Scholarship Program, and expands Program eligibility.

**EXPLANATION:** The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the additional \$3.5 million mandated appropriation in FY 2023. It is important to note that \$3.5 million was reduced by the Board of Public Works on July 1, 2020. However, that \$3.5 million is included as a FY 2021 deficiency appropriation, which becomes immediately available upon passage of the FY 2022 Budget. The FY 2022 Budget also fully funds the \$15 million mandate for the Promise Scholarship Program.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which requires spending allocations for FY 2022 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2020.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19, making revenue predictions for the remainder of FY 2021 and FY 2022 highly volatile. Many individuals and households are unemployed or underemployed, with many industry sectors operating at much less than 100% capacity. Federal stimulus programs are providing much needed relief, but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability.

The highest priority of the Administration is to work with the 2021 General Assembly in enacting the Governor's emergency Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act (SB 496/HB 612 RELIEF Act). The RELIEF Act provides \$1 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at  
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