

9 Feb 2021

Members of the House Ways & Means Committee,

Working with students across Maryland as Student Regent, I have had the great pleasure of serving alongside many of our Student Government Association (SGA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA) Presidents. Speaking with these student leaders, I have obtained a greater understanding of and appreciation for the tenacity, resolve, and dedication of the 172,000 students within our USM community and the thousands more who are attending non-System schools as they pursue higher education in Maryland.

One of the many challenges students across Maryland encounter on a daily basis is that of financial hardship. While the COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all in a myriad of ways, our students have been some of the hardest hit. A year ago, when the pandemic began, many students employed on campus lost their jobs as we transitioned to a virtual setting. Although Congress passed the CARES Act to assist families struggling to make ends meet, many of our students were excluded from receiving a stimulus check as anyone who had been claimed as a dependent in 2020 tax filings was ineligible to receive these federal funds. We are Maryland Strong, and we are resilient, yet many of us are also struggling amid this pandemic.

While Maryland is a leader in education, we are behind the times when it comes to this issue of textbook affordability. Within our region, it is crucial to note that no other state bordering Maryland taxes textbooksⁱ. Bearing this in mind, I hope you will consider supporting students across Maryland by voting in favor of HB 792.

I hope you will choose to stand with us in this effort to lend a helping hand to Maryland students by expanding the back-to-school week and providing this much-needed textbook tax relief for our students.

Very Respectfully,
Nathaniel Sansom

ⁱ <https://www.nacs.org/College-Textbook-Sales-Tax-Exemptions>