



**Testimony of the University of Baltimore  
President Kurt L. Schmoke**

**Ways and Means Committee  
January 20, 2021**

**House Bill 96, Education – High School Graduation Requirements – Application  
SUPPORT**

The University of Baltimore **supports HB 96 – High School Graduation Requirements – Application** – to require high school students to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. This bill is intended to capture the attention of college-going students to complete this important form on time.

The FAFSA form collects critical pieces of information from students seeking to attend college. This data is used to determine a student’s financial aid eligibility, including whether a student is eligible for federal aid or aid from other financial sources, such as states or colleges. Completion of the FAFSA form is critical for most students who want to attend college. The federal government, colleges and states all have strict deadlines for submitting this form’s important data. Meeting deadlines can be challenging at any age, but particularly for high school students. At UB, we see students who do not complete the form or do not complete it on time. As a result, students can miss opportunities for receiving funding, which results in delayed attendance or sometimes college dreams are deferred completely and unnecessarily.

HB 96 helps to avert this situation of incomplete or untimely FAFSA forms, and puts students in the best possible position to successfully work through the financial aid process. The bill also includes a waiver provision for those students who wish to pursue careers after high school that do not require their involvement with the financial aid system. For college-going students, affordability is key. Students must prepare early and have a financial plan for payment that includes timely completion of the FAFSA form in order to access all available aid. HB 96 helps Maryland students achieve that goal.

Thank you for your consideration. We respectfully ask for the committee’s favorable report of HB 96.