

As a professor at Salisbury University, I am constantly worried about how the cost of textbooks will affect my students. I speak regularly with other faculty and many of us adjust our assignments for the class and do not assign the best book for our course because of financial considerations. We are happy to be as flexible as we can, and as a faculty member I work hard to find options that are less financially challenging for students, but it is not always possible.

The cost of textbooks also has an increased impact on students lower on the socio-economic scale. Although I make sure copies of the books are available at the library on reserve for review, the library can only keep those books in house and the student must look at them over a shortened period of time. The student must come to the library during open house to be able to gain access to the book if they cannot afford their own copy. It is wonderful that the students can do this to be able to gain their education when they do not have the funds to purchase the textbook, but it also provides challenges for the students and those who are often in most need of support do not have as easy access to the course materials, and therefore are more at risk of doing less well in the course.

I support this bill thoroughly because by at least removing the taxes upon the textbooks at the beginning of each term when the students need to buy them, the students will have less financial impact and can possibly purchase some materials they might not have been able to otherwise to aid in their education. I believe we could go even further, but this is an excellent first step towards opening more equal access to education for all of our students in Maryland.