



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Testimony by
Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director
April 4, 2022

SB 799 – Community College Tuition and Residency Waivers – Funding

POSITION: Support

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) representing Maryland's 16 two-year public institutions for postsecondary education, we offer our support for this legislation and thank Senator Guzzone for his sponsorship. MACC is also supportive of the SB799 as amended that would limit funding for the fiscal years 2024-2026 and will require new reporting requirements.

This legislation provides an annual \$10 M appropriation to reimburse Maryland's community college for state-mandated tuition and residency waivers. Tuition waivers at our community colleges have gradually increased over the past decade. In academic year 2019-2020, approximately 12,000 students were provided a waiver at a Maryland community college.

The statutory mandated waivers go to extremely needy populations in our State, such as:

- Foster care students
- Unaccompanied homeless youth
- Students with disabilities, and
- Senior citizens

Helping this population of students is critical to Maryland yet waiving their cost of attendance is not a sustainable policy to provide the types of support services these populations need and deserve. Waiving tuition does not mean that the cost of educating a student goes away. Unfortunately, these costs must be absorbed by other students through tuition increases or by underfunding programs and student services.

The current tuition waiver policies force the colleges to absorb the educational expenses, which is a model that is contradictory to goal of providing access to these students. With this legislation, we can support these students, with additional services such as interpreters, tutors, and counseling that can supplement their academic goals.

In addition, individuals from the following groups are eligible for in-county or in-state tuition waivers:

- USA Armed Forces or National Guard and their families
- Public school teachers taking a required course
- Children of State or local public safety employees killed in the line of duty, and
- Students enroll in health workforce shortage areas and nursing students may qualify for reimbursement of out-of-county fees

I'm not suggesting that we repeal these waivers, but I am asking that we begin to create sustainable public policy for Maryland's community colleges by creating a \$10 M annual appropriation to reimburse the institutions who are serving these populations of our students. MACC requests a favorable report.