

KIPP:Forward

February 18th, 2022

Dear Members of the Maryland House of Representatives:

I am writing on behalf of KIPP Baltimore to advocate and support changes outlined in HB 734 to the Guaranteed Access Grant Program.

I have worked in Maryland with college enrolled students for 7 years. In that time our organization has supported many Guaranteed Access Grant recipients. This program has been instrumental in giving Maryland students access to higher education, while also providing a sustainable financial pathway to graduation.

As the grant is currently written, students whose family income increases even slightly over the income limit lose the grant completely. In one case, I had a student whose household size decreased by one, putting her family's income above the income maximum. In this student's case she lost \$38,000 in financial aid yearly since she attended an institution that matched the Guaranteed Access grant. This student's family income is only modestly above the maximum, however the financial implications of the loss of the Guaranteed Access grant have been devastating. This student has since had to take on significant loan burden to stay at her school of choice. Outside of the financial circumstances, the stress of paying for school and advocating for more financial aid took a heavy toll on her mental health. She is still at her school of choice, but at significant burden to her and her family. This is just one student example of the impact this loss has had on one Maryland family. Maryland students deserve better.

KIPP Baltimore supports HB 734. Guaranteed Access Grant recipients whose family income goes above the renewal maximum should remain eligible for the GA award on the following methodology: the award amount should be reduced by the amount of the income overage, dollar for dollar rounded to the nearest \$100.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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