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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Testimony in Support of HB648 - Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program - Funding

The Appropriations Committee established the Maryland Higher Education Outreach & College Access Program as a two-year pilot through legislation I proposed in 2015. It was then given an extension in 2018, and was made permanent during last year's Session.

Following its establishment, the Governor funded the program with a \$250,000 appropriation that has been distributed to several non-profit agencies across the State. These agencies focus on outreach efforts to support and encourage low-income high school students to attend & complete college. Under the bill we passed last year, the program now has a permanent \$200,000 appropriation. In order to provide adequate funding for this important program, we are coming back this year with HB648 to increase the annual appropriation to \$7 million.

These grants have been used to fund workshops on college & career readiness, financial aid, college admissions and thousands of high school students across the State. One of those non-profit organizations, First Generation College Bound, has aided nearly 1,000 program participants in graduating with a college degree through this program.

Getting admitted to a higher education institution is difficult for any student in Maryland, but especially those who have grown up under difficult circumstances. These nonprofits play a crucial role in assisting our young people in achieving their academic and career goals.

This program is incredibly important, because it creates opportunities for young people who would not have them otherwise. To ensure that these nonprofits can continue to provide these important services, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB648.