

House Appropriations Committee

Testimony by Dr. Sandra L. Kurtinitis

President of the Community College of Baltimore County

March 15, 2022

HB 1102 – Community College Tuition and Residency Waivers – Funding

POSITION: Support

As President of the Community College of Baltimore County serving as Chair of the Presidents Council of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), I am pleased and proud to offer testimony in support of HB 1102 and to thank Delegate Feldmark for her sponsorship.

As president of a community college with an open door mission, I write to support this legislation that would finally begin to address a longstanding funding shortfall based on the significant number of legislatively mandated tuition waivers at our colleges. The Community College of Baltimore County has a longstanding commitment to inviting all into our classrooms who may benefit from the opportunity, but it is difficult to continue to absorb the roughly \$3M in tuition wavers that we process each year.

Annually we serve just under 3,000 students across the roughly 12 categories of official waivers. While we welcome these students as we do all students, the financial impact is sizable. We support the waivers that make it possible for many to attend our community colleges who otherwise might not be able to do so nonetheless, but, after many years of absorbing the cost, we are pleased to see that we may finally receive financial redress.

Supporting these populations of students is critical to Maryland, yet waiving their cost of attendance is not sustainable if we are to provide the special support services many of these students need and deserve. Waiving tuition does not waiver away the cost of educating a student; these costs are passed on to other students through tuition increases or by underfunding programs and student services.

The current tuition waiver policies force the colleges to simply absorb these uncompensated educational expenses. This model, however, is contradictory to our goal of providing access to these students. This legislation will enable us to better support these students with additional services such as interpreters, tutors, and counseling that can supplement their academic goals.

We applaud Delegate Feldmark for advancing this proposal and for lending both sensitivity and understanding to the delicate balance in serving thousands of students created by unfunded waivers.