



February 15, 2022

Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

**In Support of HB 648: Education – Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program**

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates's Appropriations Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1400 members and fully support establishing the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program here within Maryland.

Many of the families and their children that we represent need access to higher education opportunities that this type of program would establish for the first time here in Maryland. Our military and non-military families of children with disabilities (along with all of Maryland's students) especially need the support of such a program.

For so many, college seems to be a place and a goal that is simply unattainable. But this kind of legislation can make that goal a reality for so many Maryland students. As a begin our journey toward reforming education as part of the early stages of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future ramp up and rollout. We need to reach more students and help them access opportunities for higher learning.

We need to be providing our students with access to higher education opportunities so that they may compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, and to help to create the businesses of future. Without higher education we are creating a work force or workers that are having their jobs slowly phased out. We need to be creating the entrepreneurs of the coming decades, in industries that can carry our economy into the future within many industries including information technology, science and the medical technologies.

We trust that the establishment of such a wonderful outreach program will positively impact the lives of many thousands of Maryland's students and help to further support them into their future pursuits.

Please support House Bill 648 and return a favorable report. Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

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