



February 9, 2022

Committees: Environment and Transportation & Economic Matters

Testimony on: SB0152 – Transcripts Prohibition on Punitive Measures Related to Student Debts

Position: Favorable

RE: Testimony in support of SB0152

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports SB0152 that prohibits punitive measures by higher education institutions, specifically refusing transcript requests from students who owe debts to the institution. SB0152 will:

- Provide equal access to individuals facing difficult financial circumstances
- Enable equal opportunity for all members of a higher education institution
- Prevent higher education institutions from employing less favorable treatment to students in-debt

Right now, the University of Maryland can withhold transcripts to students or former students if they have unpaid room and board costs, tuition, or fees that have yet to be paid. It does not matter if the fine is big or small; the universities can withhold the transcript despite the problems that it can cause the student. The inability of students to receive their transcripts prevents them from finding work, transferring to other universities, or going on to graduate school. As a result, the policy makes it harder for students to pay their college debts and loans, and as time goes on, the debt owed to the university will grow and making the problem worse for the student.

This policy disproportionately affects low-income and working students who are kept in a cycle of debt as they need the transcript to find a job and then pay back what they owe. This bill will help end the cycle by giving students control over their college transcripts. As a result, all students, regardless of income, will be able use their education and transcripts to better their lives, whether that means attending graduate school or applying for a job. Students will be able to take ownership of their lives and make the choices that set themselves up for future success without worrying about unpaid fees derailing their plans. This bill recognizes that students are entitled to own their grades, that they worked for and earned.

We request a favorable vote on HB307.



Sincerely,

Aiden Wechsler

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