



Senate Bill 540

Higher Education - Transfer Platform - Established (Transfer With Success Act 2.0)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee

Date: March 2, 2022

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 540. This bill would require the Maryland Higher Education Commission to develop a collaborative digital platform that supports an easier transition for community college students to Maryland's four-year public institutions. It would cut down on administrative and operational costs and would make the process of transferring schools easier on both Maryland's students and schools.

Transferring credits continues to be an obstacle for community college students who matriculate to a four-year institution. Navigating the complex array of transfer policies is a consistent challenge, and students are losing credits in the process. When a student must retake a course at another higher education institution, they are delaying their graduation, using up additional state funding, and ultimately, paying more in tuition. These factors all contribute to students not successfully accomplishing their academic credential.

SB 540 seeks to address these challenges by requiring participating institutions to maintain and honor credits from community college courses approved for transfer. There should be no reason for students to lose credits if they are attending an accredited Maryland institution.

Furthermore, Maryland's community colleges have often been left behind in state partnerships to innovatively address challenges in the higher education community. SB 540 would close some of these gaps and would offer state collaboration to feasibly address the challenges of the transfer process. Counties applaud the bill's state budget allocation of \$1 million to develop and implement the digital transfer platform and welcome the opportunity for local community colleges to participate in the program at no cost to the institutions. This would be a strong demonstration of the State's commitment to an equitable distribution of support for our community colleges.

Counties recognize that community colleges will continue to pave the way for Marylanders to re-enter the workforce and help rebuild after the pandemic. SB 540 would streamline some of the process for them to do so. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 540 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.