

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB699
Public High Schools – Financial Literacy– Curriculum, Graduation Requirement, and
Professional Development

Vaishnavi Banda

vaishnavi.banda@innovate-x.org (240) 308-9360

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for SB699, sponsored by Senator Klausmeier for a financial literacy graduation requirement and professional development for public school students in Maryland.

My name is Vaishnavi Banda and I am a sophomore at Poolesville High School in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Maryland prides itself on preparing students for college and careers. I personally hope to go to college after I graduate, but the cost of college is always going to be in the back of my head. As a first-generation immigrant, my parents have never experienced applying to colleges in America before. Learning how to find scholarships or where to get FAFSA forms is a task that is going to be placed on me. The Maryland educational system can not expect that students will learn these basic financial needs from family because that's a luxury many don't have. Many students miss out on going to college, or their preferred college, because of lack of knowledge.

Poolesville High School offers a plethora of classes, from vector algebra to ceramics, but it doesn't offer personal finance. Extremely specialized classes, like Quantum Physics, may be a great class for students looking to pursue further education in Physics, but personal finance? That's a course needed for everyone, not just someone looking for a specific pathway.

Throughout the past year and a half of advocating for personal finance education, I have met many other students who feel the worry and burden of being unable to afford higher education. One of my peers said, "High school classes should be our first glance into the real world, not once we get into college." By not offering a personal finance class, Maryland is setting up students to learn financial responsibility only after they've already made a critical financial mistake. So today, I ask you to take a crucial step in ensuring college and career readiness for all students by voting in favor of this resolution. For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB699.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Vaishnavi Banda