

Oral Testimony – 3/21/23

My name is Tricia Stavros, and my family is approaching the third semester without access to rollover earnings necessary to pay for college. I am here today with the urgent request that you honor the contract we signed. We made FAFSA and college decisions based on the December 2021 statement and now those funds have disappeared.

In 2009, I signed up for a plan where I would be able to roll over earnings when it was time to pay for college. In 2022, my contract suddenly changed, altering the method in which the earnings are calculated. This change has caused my family detrimental harm and needs to be reversed.

This issue has reached national coverage and is an embarrassment to the State of Maryland. Everyone knows this is not a calculation error. The Trust is overflowing at the tune of 130%, making money on our payments and the surplus of funds that were not rolled over in previous years. Why would all plan holders before us receive 100% earnings, and future plan holders be entitled to 6% earnings, but families with children in college now receive 0% earnings? It makes no sense.

These proposed bills to form committees and move responsibility are all stall tactics and will not pay for college bills due now. The fix is SIMPLE. My proposed amendments are:

- (1) Comply with contracts we signed and restore accounts to reflect the December 2021 values;
- (2) Fund these accounts from the lucrative MD 529 Trust or from the MD General Fund;
- (3) Until resolved, plan holders should be allowed to take minimum tuition benefits without forfeiting claims to earnings rollovers; and
- (4) Set priority disbursements no later than June 1, 2023, for beneficiaries currently in college.

Anything other than doing this is a crime, breach of contract, and outright fraud. We need our earnings NOW to pay for college, not in four years after our children graduate, and definitely not in a ROTH IRA. Thank you.