



1 N Haven St
Suite 4
Baltimore, MD 21224
www.meritbaltimore.org

TESTIMONY ON HB 1129
House Appropriations Committee
by the

Medical Educational Resource Initiatives for Teens, Inc (MERIT)
March 15, 2023

Board Chair
Dr. Sherita Golden

Vice Chair
Dr. Rudy Ruiz

Staff Success Chair
Chitamawe Daka-Mulwanda

Fundraising Chair
Kristin Kosmides

Strategic Growth Chair
Dr. John Kontor

Treasurer
Brian McDonald

(Co-Founder)
Dr. Tyler Mains

(Co-Founder)
Shyam Gadwal

Dr. Krista Ratliff

Dr. Scott Wright

Geoffrey Genth

Dr. David Hellmann

Dr. Ilana Mittman

Chair Rosenberg, members of the Committee. My name is Jimmy Tadlock, Executive Director, Medical Educational Resource Initiatives for Teens, Inc (MERIT). I am pleased to provide testimony on HB 1129 on behalf of Medical Educational Resource Initiatives for Teens, Inc (MERIT). I am testifying in support of HB 1129 with amendments. MERIT supports the requirement that the Governor include in the annual budget bill a certain appropriation to the Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program; and generally relating to student financial assistance programs. This is crucial for nonprofit organizations like MERIT to provide outreach and make a significant impact on the future of thousands of Marylanders and the state's economy.

I. MERIT supports the following provisions included in the bill.

1. Encourage low-income Maryland high school students to attend and complete college.
2. Connect potential college and university students with nonprofit organizations that have a history of successful higher education outcomes for targeted youth.
3. Create an equal matching fund for nonprofit organizations to access in order to increase college outreach services to low-income students.
4. Provide funding for nonprofit organizations that are already established in communities to provide targeted outreach to encourage low-income students to enroll in college; and
5. Increase the number of low-income students attending and succeeding in college.

II. The Commission shall administer the Program.

To carry out the purposes of the Program, the Commission shall:

1. Establish a grant program to be published on the Commission's website.

through which nonprofit organizations may learn about eligibility, application, and compliance requirements and apply for funding as provided under this subtitle.

2. Develop application requirements and review and approve applications.
3. Develop a process for verifying that matching funds are available; and
4. Allocate funding to approved nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis.

III. To be eligible for participation in the Program, a nonprofit organization shall:

1. Be located in the State.
2. Have a contract or memorandum of understanding with a local school system or an institution of higher education or must establish one if one does not exist; and
3. NOT required to pursue an equal match for funds requested.

IV. A nonprofit organization that receives funding through the Program shall:

1. Submit data on outreach programs.
2. Track student progress through the higher education system; and
3. Submit annual reports to the Commission on or before October following the fiscal year in which funds were received.

V. MERIT recommends amendments as follows:

1. NOT BE required to pursue an equal match for funds requested. Small nonprofits like MERIT, struggle each year to obtain sustained funding. Many donors limit donations to one year or may change the focus of their giving strategies. We recommend matching funding not be a requirement for this reason.

Respectfully submitted by Jimmy Tadlock, Executive Director, Medical Educational Resource Initiatives for Teens, Inc (MERIT).