

KIPP:Forward

February 21, 2023

To Members of the Maryland House of Delegates:

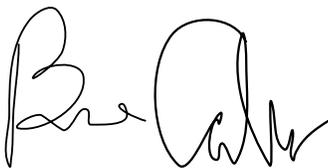
I am writing to advocate for and support HB 923 outlining changes to the award criteria for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). As a longtime member of KIPP Baltimore's College and Career Support Team, I write to advocate for the hundreds of students I support each year as they pursue their professional and personal goals.

I have worked in Maryland with college-enrolled students for eight years. In that time our organization has supported hundreds of students who receive funding from MHEC. **This program has been instrumental in giving Maryland students access to higher education**, while also providing a sustainable financial pathway to graduation.

This funding is critical for students to persist in college to completion, achieve their higher education aspirations, and ultimately attain their unique career goals. The amendments suggested in HB 923 are critical to ensuring that the students for which this support is intended have the access they deserve, particularly the **elimination of the GPA requirement; requirement to enroll within one year of high school;** and the age limit. Further, I support the recommended changes to the standards of verification. MHEC verification standards must be aligned to the federal government's access standards in order to reduce burden on Maryland students.

I support every effort to increase students' access to MHEC programs. **Considering this, I believe that a broader study should be conducted on the EA and GA programs in addition to the amendments made in HB 923.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with further questions, or to consult with KIPP Baltimore leadership or my KIPP Forward colleagues.



Brianna Callahan, MSW
Manager of Alumni Persistence
KIPP Baltimore