

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 297
Community Colleges – Capital Projects – State Share Adjustment**

**Dr. Richard Midcap, President
Garrett College
February 8, 2023**

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) oversees the Community College Construction Grant Program (CCCGP). The state share complies with the cost-sharing provisions in Title 11-105 (j) of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. Based on that formula, the State contributes between 50 and 75% of each capital project, with the home county (or counties) responsible for the remainder of the funding.

Senate Bill 297 would amend 11-105 (j) to provide an adjustment to the formula for counties in the bottom quartile of median household income that currently receive 50% state funding for community college capital projects. The local share would be reduced to equal the local share of the adjacent county that is less than 50% but closest to 50%.

While “Garrett College” is found nowhere within SB297’s language, I freely admit that I strongly support this bill because of the dramatic impact it would have on our ability to undertake capital projects at my college. The 50% local share currently required for Garrett College projects is an extremely heavy lift for Garrett County. We are – by far – the smallest jurisdiction in the state with a single county supporting a community college. As a frame of reference, Garrett County has about 29,000 residents. The next-smallest counties supporting community colleges are Allegany County (approximately 71,000 residents) and Cecil County (approximately 100,000 residents).

The change, if implemented for projects starting in Fiscal Year 2025, would permit Garrett County to obtain the same 70% state share as neighboring Allegany County. Such a change would significantly improve our prospects for future capital projects. If this adjustment is approved, the local share on a \$10 million capital project at Garrett College would drop from \$5 million to \$3 million. For my college, this bill could be the difference between moving forward or delaying our next capital project – a much-needed renovation of our cafeteria and related spaces in our student center.

I’m pleased to say our request has overwhelming support. The Maryland Association of Community Colleges’ Council of Presidents voted last August to unanimously support this bill. The Garrett County Commissioners and the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce are also formally supporting SB297.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony. I hope after careful consideration this committee will endorse SB297.