

We have a student that made her college list and other decisions based on what we as a family could afford. A large portion of that decision relied on the annual statement on December 31, 2021, that included the "total FAFSA reporting value," defined as the "refund value" of our accounts. This total tracked with the since inception rate of return as described above, which was about 6 percent. Those documents state that **"after 60 days the information will be considered correct and binding for the account."** The 529 board never informed us of any changes during this 60-day window. I even called during the summer when I noticed the value had gone down and was told that I could use the 2021 valuation letter as my FAFSA value.

That changed by the Fall. The 529 board has never sent written communications to account holders that the FAFSA numbers were wrong, as required by our contracts. We relied on these 2021 documents, and other corroboration from the Trust, to make financial decisions. I submitted a request for a recalculation on October 4<sup>th</sup> and didn't receive anything until January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. That valuation is barely above the contract amount we put in.

This is not what we expected to have when we set up this account. We had an older account with the Prepaid college trust where we paid over \$10,000 for a 2-year college plan and received our contract amount, plus earnings totaling \$11,730. We paid into this account for 35 months and received a return rate of around 7%. For our current account, which we have been paying into for 17 years, the earnings rate is now only 1% based on your revised calculations. This is not acceptable. The Trust is not entitled to retroactively change the earnings calculations prior to November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. This is a significant change that breaches Article IX in the contract.

And now we are trying to negotiate with colleges to see if they will consider more aid for our child. These are all colleges that were in our wheelhouse prior to the egregious actions of the MPCT 529 Board. We cannot fully at ease and celebrate our child's efforts and accomplishments because this is hanging over the whole process. If we are able to get some more aid from a school, that means there may be less aid for another student. The actions of the MD 529 Board have implications beyond what they understand. We are asking that this bill include provisions that the rollover amounts presented in the December 2021 letters, impel the Trust to make those who have been adversely affected by their actions whole, and set up a go forward structure to prevent this from happening to other Maryland families.

This is a cruel change that should not have occurred. PLEASE HELP US AND FIX THIS NOW!