



1401 Okie St. NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002

**Board of Directors**

February 27, 2024

**President**

Aaron Kissel

**Vice President**

M. Monique McCloud-Manley  
Mercer

**Treasurer**

Gina Baker Chambers  
Artemis Real Estate Partners

Rhonda Broussard  
Beloved Community

Eric Carter  
Axiom

Jessica Cash  
Vista Equity Partners

Jeanette Ferran Astorga  
Zoetis

Dr. Susan Glover  
Tour de Force Partners

Richard Morrissey  
Sullivan and Cromwell

Dr. DeRionne Pollard  
Nevada State College

Aubrey Quinn  
Entertainment Software Association

Ron Vassallo  
Kaptivate, LLC

Joseph Yusuf  
Howard University

Delegate Ben Barnes  
Appropriations Committee  
Maryland State Legislature  
House Office Building  
Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Generation Hope's Testimony In Support of House Bill 0463 - Maryland Higher Education Commission – Demographic Data Collection – Parental Status

Dear Delegate Ben Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

As a mother of five who was a teen parent, I have experienced first-hand the transformative power of a degree for an entire family. As a proud Maryland resident and advocate for equity, I work daily to ensure all parenting college students have the opportunities to succeed in higher education, experience economic mobility, and thrive across generations. I am asking you to support HB 0463: Maryland Higher Education Commission – Demographic Data Collection – Parental Status so that parenting college students can be identified, valued, and justly supported in higher education settings across the state of Maryland.

Supporting this legislation means supporting Maryland's continued status as a leader in higher education. If passed, HB 0463 would require higher education institutions in the state to collect and report data regarding the parental status of students. Better data collection is an essential first step to improving college completion rates for student parents. Even though more than one in five college students in the United States are raising children while attending school, parenting students are commonly unseen and underserved by higher education institutions, data analysts, and policymakers nationwide. Based on this data, one can assume that more than 70,000 Marylanders are currently parenting while attending college part- or full-time. As this population grows, policymakers at every level must understand their specific needs and invest in their success.

Championing student-parent success is a matter of social and racial justice, as student parents are more likely to be students of color and come from low-income backgrounds than their non-parenting peers. In Maryland and across the country, the higher education attainment of millions of parents is impacted by the intersection of their parenting status with other identities and experiences, including race, ethnicity, immigration status, socioeconomic status, sexuality, gender identity, faith, and more. Expanding the demographic data collected and reported by higher education institutions will help ensure that vulnerable groups such as student parents are noticed and included.

As an elected official, your role is to support and defend all of your constituents. Parenting students across the state count on you to make choices that mitigate barriers to college completion and set them up to succeed in higher education and beyond. As a former student parent who cares deeply about removing barriers to postsecondary access and degree attainment, I ask you to support HB 0463: Maryland Higher Education Commission – Demographic Data Collection – Parental Status.

Please feel free to reach out to Generation Hope's policy team at [policy@generationhope.org](mailto:policy@generationhope.org) with any questions, concerns, or requests.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nicole Lynn Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "N" and "L".

Nicole Lynn Lewis  
Founder & CEO  
Generation Hope