

Committees: Appropriations

Testimony on: *HB0811*

Position: *Favorable*

2/16/2024

Chair, Vice Chair, and the members of the Appropriations Committee,

The University of Maryland – College Park Student Government Association *supports HB0811.*

For the 2023-2024 academic year, I had to undergo the process of professional judgment for my FAFSA being that my mother lost her job the summer before Fall 2023. I started this process in August 2023 and did not receive my updated aid till January 2024. The appeal did not even go through till December 2023, and that was with constant reminders and emails back and forth with the financial aid office. The process felt lethargic and unpolished simply because every time I contacted the financial aid office, I had to talk to a completely different advisor. Each had to read my case over again and give me a different form of advice.

For a while, getting the aid I deserved felt impossible, and not having a full time advisor on this sort of case definitely slowed down the process. You could argue that such timing is trivial being that I received the updated aid regardless, however that Fall semester being that I put everything I had to pay off tuition, I was living broke for no reason. And even then, I was fortunate enough to have a job and have enough to pay off the tuition eventually, however others do not and in such a situation would have to bear late fees and registration blocks while waiting for an aid update. We need to improve the workflow for getting the deserved aid as students, and starting with counselors is a great first step.

I therefore respectfully request a favorable vote on *HB0811*

Thank you,
Amman Vahora



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