MACC
MARYLAND ASSOCIATION
OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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House Appropriations Committee
February 28, 2024

HB 1398 - Higher Education – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Eligibility

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 1398**, which seeks to expand eligibility for loan repayment to veterinarians working at animal shelters. This legislation would expand the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include individuals with a veterinary degree who provide services at a shelter for a specified amount of time per week.

Maryland's community colleges serve as pathways to students pursuing higher education, including veterinary studies. Many students attending community colleges may rely on loans to finance their education. By providing loan assistance for graduates who work as veterinarians at animal shelters, the legislation will help alleviate the burden of student debt, making it more financially feasible for individuals to pursue careers in veterinary medicine.

Secondly, animal shelters, often operated by local communities or non-profit organizations, play a crucial role in Maryland's local communities. By incentivizing veterinarians to work in these settings through loan assistance programs, the bill supports the vital work of animal shelters and promotes the health and well-being of animals in communities served by community colleges.

Loan repayment programs provide financial support that can increase retention rates and improve completion rates among community college students. This bill is another tool in the toolkit to ensure students can successfully achieve their educational goals without being derailed by financial obstacles. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 1398.**

For questions, please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org).