

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB637
Higher Education – Undocumented Students – Out of State Tuition
Exemption Eligibility

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Date: February 27, 2024

Position: Support

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mariam Hashiru. I am an Undocumented Pre-pharmacy student, a Junior at Morgan State University with a chemistry major, and a recent graduate from The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC' 2023) serving as a liaison for resources for high school and college Undocumented students especially at CCBC and Baltimore County public schools (BCPS) like my former high school, Owings Mills High School in Owings Mills, Maryland. I am writing on behalf of UndocuBear, an undocumented student Organization in Morgan State University and I strongly support House Bill SB637 Higher Education-Undocumented Students-Out of State Tuition Exemption Eligibility.

I am an undocumented student who moved from Nigeria at the age of 13 and spent all my high school years in Maryland and little did I know that being an undocumented student will cordially invite more challenges to my plate in the search of attaining a college education in the United States. I understand how hard it is to constantly hear phrases like “NO” or “You are not eligible” and would always imagine the number of teenagers that had to give up their education when they finally found hope - a financial aid opportunity made for students like them but are not eligible because they cannot provide 3 years proof of taxes from their parents or legal guardians. My goal is to make undocumented students like me around Maryland aware that pursuing an education is still a possibility no matter what their status says and is the reason why I am testifying on behalf of all the undocumented students in Maryland today. As an undocumented high schooler trying to navigate the higher education system there were no resources available for me to achieve my dreams of going to college. I was hit with fear during my 11th grade year when my peers were talking about FAFSA, and my high school counselors were not equipped or aware of resources that could help me. I would conduct research on resources for “students not eligible for FAFSA” every day after school and it wasn't until I came across the Maryland Dream Act online. It allowed students like me an opportunity to pay in-state tuition at CCBC at the time.

Through that I went to CCBC debt free and was able to get a full ride at Morgan State University where I am currently taking my prerequisites for pharmacy school with the goal of starting a PharmD in the 2024-2025 school year. Despite everything I have gone through as a student and the issues I faced due to my immigration status; I aspire to become an industrial pharmacist closing the gaps in the skincare world. The Maryland Dream Act changed my life, and SB637 will change many others.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB637.

