



WISE

Women · Indivisible · Strong · Effective¹

Feb 11, 2024

Dear Members of the Health and Government Operations and the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees,

I am writing on behalf of Maryland WISE women to ask you for favorable consideration of Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility, SB0334/HB0393. This bill is simple - it enlarges the population of dental professionals that have access to the current program. As the program stands now, it leaves out part-time dental office professionals.

As a group of primarily professional women advocates, WISE is concerned that the current program leaves professional women out. Out of all the students currently enrolled in accredited dental hygiene programs, 94.7 percent are women.² We also know that women are nearly twice as likely as men to work part-time.³ Therefore, by excluding part-time professionals, you are denying primarily women an important opportunity.

It is our understanding that the bill requires no additional funding, and that any loan repayment to a part-time dentist/dental hygienist would be pro-rated accordingly. This bill would get the existing pool of funding to a more diverse pool of people.

Thank you in advance for a favorable vote on SB0334/HB0393.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michelle Koul

Maryland WISE Women

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[facebook.com/WomenIndivisibleStrongEffective](https://www.facebook.com/WomenIndivisibleStrongEffective)

¹ WISE is a local organization of over 700 women, an information platform for women of diverse views that have come together to promote values and rights that foster inclusivity, fairness and safety in our Anne Arundel County, MD communities. We continue to use our collective energy to act and advocate on a range of issues, particularly at the local level, and we support elected officials who are consistent with our mission, while holding them accountable.

² 2018-19 ADA Survey of Allied Dental Education

³ <https://statusofwomendata.org/earnings-and-the-gender-wage-gap/womens-labor-force-participation/#:~:text=Part%2Dime%20Work,with%2015.8%20percent%3B%20Table%20B2>.

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