

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 637
Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption
Eligibility

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 637, which would reduce the number of years an individual or the individual's parent or guardian must file taxes before the academic year to be eligible to receive an out-of-state tuition exemption.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As public school educators, our charge is to teach and guide each and every student, regardless of immigration status, income, or background. We firmly believe that all students should have the opportunity to continue working toward their career goals after they graduate high school, which for many means having access to postsecondary studies. This legislation would rightly expand that access by making more Maryland high school graduates eligible for in-state tuition at state colleges and universities.

We were vocal supporters of the Maryland Dream Act during its initial passage, and we continue to champion policies that promote equitable access to higher education. Adjusting the in-state tuition eligibility requirement for taxes filed from 3 years to 1 year will make this policy available to a greater number of hardworking Maryland students, including those who are undocumented immigrants, and ensures access for those who were not aware of or able to meet the tax requirements earlier in their high school career.

We urge the Committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 637.