



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
Higher Education – Undocumented Students – Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable

February 28, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates that believe that systems impacting our state’s students must treat them justly so they can thrive – that includes the higher education system. **Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on SB 637**, which expands in-state tuition eligibility for undocumented students. Undocumented students, due to their immigration status, are not always eligible for in-state tuition, even if they have lived and went to school in Maryland their whole life¹. Out-of-state tuition rates vary, but they’re often two or three times higher than in-state rates creating large financial barriers to accessing post-secondary education¹.

The third pillar of the Blueprint, College and Career Readiness, imagines a Maryland where students of all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds have equitable access to high-quality higher education opportunities. SB637, as introduced, would amend and improve the law to lower the three-year requirement that an individual or individual’s parent or legal guardian must provide documentation of Maryland income tax return filings to the taxable (one) year immediately before the academic year in which the tuition rate exemption would apply.

Senate Bill 637:

- Expands postsecondary opportunities, educational and professional prospects, and improves socioeconomic mobility for Maryland’s undocumented students and their families.
- Aligns Maryland policies with the college enrollment and access policies of 11 U.S. states (AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, MA, NV, NJ, NY, TX, WA) with large shares of undocumented students that currently extend in-state resident tuition to students with no requirement to show proof of state income tax returns for student eligibility¹.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class public school system where all students can succeed. SB637 represents a step in the right direction to easing roadblocks for undocumented students – who are often students of color and from low-income families – to access the promises of higher education.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 637.

For more information, contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org

¹ [Education Trust. 2023](#)