



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB 455 College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions
Applications - Fees - Prohibition**

Too many students in our state struggle to create a clear path to quality higher education, often barred by financial barriers that have no place in our great state. Far too many Black and brown students are unable to properly plan for their future, challenge themselves academically, and gain highly beneficial college credits. Furthermore, many low-income or financially insecure students are unable to apply to a wider range of institutions because of the high cost of applications. This bill would help thousands of students be better ready for college, and for our state to reach the education standard we aim to achieve.

Various studies have shown the benefits of taking college preparatory classes, with participating students increasing their chances to get into more prestigious institutions, being more likely to return for a second year of college, and more likely to be better prepared for college-level classes and have a better idea of the major they want to pursue. For example, when Reed College dropped its application fees, the number of applications among the lowest economic quartile increased by 40%. The goal of the institution in this case was to attract more students over the long term and it stands by its decision to do so a few years later. An abolishment of application fees has consistently seen a rise in first-generation students attending the university.

To help promote the accessibility to schools, and improve the equity of school opportunities, I propose SB 455, which will prohibit the charging of fees regarding advanced college preparatory programs such as AP or IB classes and abolish application fees for in-state students. The average AP and IB exams cost \$98 and \$135, respectively, so these prohibitive costs must be addressed to help Black and brown students with their educational career paths. Most of the funding will come from local counties, Maryland Blueprint funding, and university revenues.

We must do our best to support our students and improve access to education and social mobility in our state. As legislators, we must improve the opportunities of our constituents and push our state to the highest quality and access to education possible.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 455.