



# NAACP

Maryland  
STATE CONFERENCE

February 27, 2024

Appropriations  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 771 – Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Pregnant and Parenting Students -  
Policy Requirements (Pregnant and Parenting Support Act)

Members of the Committee,

I am writing to offer testimony in strong support of House Bill 771, which proposes essential guidelines for public senior higher education institutions in Maryland regarding pregnant and parenting students.

As the Executive Director of the Maryland NAACP, I speak not only from a professional standpoint but also from personal experience. I understand firsthand the challenges faced by pregnant and parenting students in pursuing higher education. Balancing the responsibilities of parenthood with the demands of academia is no easy feat, and it requires unwavering determination and support.

I was once a parent navigating the complexities of college life, striving to provide a better future for my family while pursuing my educational goals. Like many others in similar situations, I encountered numerous obstacles along the way. From a lack of understanding and accommodations to outright discrimination, the journey was fraught with challenges that threatened to derail my aspirations.

House Bill 771 presents a crucial opportunity to address these challenges and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for pregnant and parenting students across our state. By mandating public senior higher education institutions to adopt policies tailored to the needs of this demographic, we are taking a significant step towards leveling the playing field and ensuring equal access to education for all.

This bill not only recognizes the unique circumstances faced by pregnant and parenting students but also acknowledges their resilience and determination to pursue their academic endeavors despite the odds stacked against them. It sends a powerful message of solidarity and support, reaffirming our commitment to fostering an educational system that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.

It's crucial to acknowledge that pregnant and parenting students from marginalized communities, particularly Black and Brown individuals, often face challenges due to systemic inequities. These disparities manifest in higher rates of poverty, inadequate access to healthcare, and discriminatory practices within educational institutions. House Bill 771 represents an opportunity to address these disparities head-on by ensuring that policies are not only inclusive but also sensitive to the unique needs and experiences of pregnant and parenting students from historically marginalized backgrounds. By prioritizing equity and actively working to dismantle systemic barriers, we can create a more just and equitable educational system for all students, regardless of race or socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, by requiring these policies to be posted on institution websites by August 1, 2025, House Bill 771 ensures transparency and accessibility, empowering students with the information they need to navigate their educational journey confidently.

In conclusion, I urge you to support House Bill 771 and stand in solidarity with pregnant and parenting students in Maryland. By doing so, we not only fulfill our moral obligation to support those most in need but also invest in the future success and prosperity of our state.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

In Service,

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