

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee - For the Hearing on
Post College and Career Readiness Pathways - Cost to Student - Alteration HB82
January 31, 2024
UNFAVORABLE**

Free State PTA represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We are here to ask for an unfavorable report for **House Bill 82. This bill aligns with Free State PTA's principles for legislative action which states that all children have a right to an excellent equitable education¹.**

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Pillar 3 strategies are designed to expand access to programs and experiences supporting students along their career and secondary education pathways. The provision that requires school districts to provide these opportunities at no cost to students or their families removes barriers based on economics. These students will have met the college and career readiness standards therefore, under the Blueprint, the school district will receive additional funding for each eligible student which will offset costs incurred to provide college preparatory, dual enrollment, certificate-bearing programs, and more. There should be no need to charge students, which will likely exacerbate access inequities.

In addition, the decision to charge or not should not be left to the school district's discretion so that students in every jurisdiction have the same benefits for achieving college and career-ready standards. Free State PTA supports the goal within the Blueprint of broadening students' horizons through diverse and inclusive college and career-readiness programs. Free State opposes House Bill 82 for its potential to create inequities in access while districts receive additional state funds to make these opportunities possible. Free State PTA therefore urges an unfavorable report for HB 82.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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¹ https://www.fspta.org/_files/ugd/d2f0e2_a663d6f6c6ad49a2aab4bc9c095c494f.pdf