



Maryland Higher Education Commission

Appropriations

House Bill 473

Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship Program - Revisions

February 4, 2025

1:00 PM

Favorable

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 473. I am Dr. Sanjay Rai, Secretary for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

Let me begin by thanking Delegate Kevin M. Harris for sponsoring House Bill 473. This bill is a departmental bill for the Maryland Higher Education Commission, which proposes a few technical amendments to expand college access and affordability for the Promise Scholarship Program.

I fully support House Bill 473, the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship Program. These technical amendments are critical to expanding college access for noncredit seeking students that are enrolled part time. As you know, community college student demographics are ever evolving. The Maryland Higher Education Commission is committed to meeting the challenges faced by students seeking to achieve their educational goals.

In fact, MHEC has already begun the work of expanding college access for part time noncredit seeking students in order to ensure that eligible students can receive up to \$5,000 to cover any remaining tuition and mandatory fee expenses after federal or state financial aid has been applied as a last dollar amount. Maryland's community colleges are fully committed to expanding the financial aid tools available for students.

MHEC intends to utilize the technical amendments to make improvements to the Promise Scholarship Program to increase financial aid for part time noncredit students attending Maryland's community colleges. House Bill 473 strengthens the Promise Scholarship Program and is essential to ensuring an equitable distribution of state resources, so that no student is left behind, who is seeking to achieve their educational goals even on part time status.

In closing, I fully support House Bill 473 and ask the Committee for a favorable report.