

House Appropriations Committee

February 18, 2025

HB 643 - Higher Education – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Eligibility

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland’s 16 community colleges, supports **HB 643**. This bill expands eligibility for the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include veterinary practitioners and technicians who provide services in Maryland, particularly in animal shelters. Loan repayment programs can help reduce financial barriers that derail students from completing their education and entering the workforce.

Maryland’s community colleges serve as pathways for students pursuing careers in veterinary medicine, with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) offering Maryland’s only accredited veterinary technology program. Many veterinary technician students may rely on loans to finance their education. By extending loan repayment assistance to veterinary technicians working in animal shelters, this legislation provides critical financial relief, making it more feasible for students to pursue and sustain careers in this essential field.

Animal shelters, often operated by local governments or nonprofit organizations, play a crucial role in Maryland’s communities. Veterinary technicians provide indispensable support in these settings, assisting with medical procedures, preventive care, and overall animal welfare. By incentivizing veterinary technicians to work in shelters through loan repayment assistance, HB 643 supports both workforce retention and the well-being of animals in communities served by community colleges.

HB 643 is an excellent step toward ensuring that Maryland’s veterinary workforce remains strong and that community college graduates can successfully transition into high-impact careers. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 643**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.