



BILL: HB0207 – Higher Education – Undocumented Students – Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

DATE: January 21, 2025

POSITION: FAVORABLE

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To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB0207. As a first-generation student and the son of Salvadorian parents, I understand the transformative power of education. My mother, who aspired to a career in Clinical Psychology, had her dreams cut short by the civil war and gang violence in El Salvador. Despite her hardships, she instilled in me a deep respect for education and the belief that knowledge is liberating. As a student at the University of Maryland, College Park, I know how critical access to affordable education is, especially for those striving to overcome barriers.

Many students in our system, particularly those without documented status, are motivated to achieve their dreams but face significant financial challenges that limit their ability to access higher education. HB0207 addresses these barriers by reducing the tax filing requirement from three years to two, easing the path for students to qualify for in-state tuition. These students are already a vital part of our communities. They are learning in our schools, contributing to our economy, and striving to better their futures. This bill ensures they can succeed and continue contributing to Maryland's growth.

Supporting HB0207 is a matter of fairness and practical investment in Maryland's future. Expanding access to higher education will strengthen our workforce by preparing more students to fill critical gaps in industries like healthcare, STEM, and education. By passing this bill, Maryland reaffirms its commitment to equity, inclusion, and the success of every student in our system. I and many other student leaders from all 12 USM institutions urge you to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jefferson Vasquez-Reyes
Director of Government Affairs