



Maryland Higher Education Commission

Appropriations

House Bill 611

Informed Enrollment Act

February 11, 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 611. My name is Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). I want to thank Delegate Sarah Wolek for sponsoring HB 611 “Institutions of Higher Education - Mandatory Disclosures for New and Prospective Students (Informed Enrollment Act).”

Access to higher education is a cornerstone of economic mobility and workforce development. However, too many students make postsecondary decisions without sufficient information about college options, costs, and outcomes. This lack of awareness can lead to poor financial decisions, high student debt, low graduation rates, and underemployment.

To ensure that students make informed choices, it is essential to provide them with comprehensive, accessible, and transparent information about colleges and universities before they commit to an institution. The College Scorecard, currently produced by the US Department of Education, provides this information in an easy to navigate and easy to understand format. This includes:

1. Academic Programs & Career Outcomes – Students should understand which institutions offer programs aligned with their career goals and have strong job placement rates in their chosen fields.

2. Affordability & Financial Aid – Clear cost comparisons, including tuition, fees, expected debt, and available financial aid, empower students to select institutions that provide the best value for their investment.

3. Graduation & Retention Rates – Understanding an institution’s success in supporting students to completion can help prospective students assess their likelihood of earning a degree.

4. Support Services & Campus Life – Access to academic advising, mental health services, and extracurricular activities contributes to student success and well-being.

5. Diversity & Inclusion – Information about campus demographics and support for underrepresented students helps ensure that students find an environment where they can thrive.

By requiring institutions to share this information on their website and social media channels, and include it in student orientation and recruitment events, students will likely be better informed before making a college decision. This information can help students choose an institution that is aligned with their academic, financial, and career goals—ultimately leading to better outcomes for individuals and society. A well-informed student body strengthens our workforce, reduces student loan burdens, and ensures that taxpayer-funded financial aid supports students in making decisions that lead to long-term success.

In closing, House Bill 611 is more than institutional accountability, it is about transparency and ensuring student success. It is aligned with MHEC's commitment to an equitable and accessible higher education system. I urge a favorable report.