



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 7, 2025

Delegate Ben Barnes  
Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **Support House Bill 704 - Higher Education-Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program**

Dear Delegate Barnes:

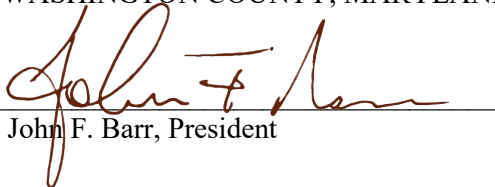
The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (the “Board”) unanimously support the passage of HB 704. The proposed bill would expand the eligible institutions for which Maryland residents can utilize the Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine in Hagerstown, Maryland. In doing so, the State will encourage the retention of Maryland’s best and brightest minds, increase the quality of professional services available in an underserved area of Maryland and, finally, increase Maryland’s tax base.

This bill will provide an incentive for Maryland residents to attend Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine and increase the total percentage of Maryland enrollees. Scholastic trends demonstrate that a substantial percentage of graduates remain in the metropolitan area of their university. This effect is compounded when graduates attend a university in their home state. According to a study conducted by the Meritus Health System in 2022, Washington County ranks amongst the most medically underserved communities in the State of Maryland. Supporting the expansion of a scholarship grant for Maryland residents who choose to attend the newly opened Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine will increase the percentage of graduates who choose to remain in Washington County following their graduation. This will in turn lead to higher quality professional services for the citizens of Washington County as well as a robust tax base for the State and County.

We ask that you invest in the future prosperity of Washington County and the State of Maryland by supporting HB 704.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

By:   
John F. Barr, President

100 West Washington Street, Suite 1101 | Hagerstown, MD 21740 | P: 240.313.2200 | F: 240.313.2201 | TDD: 711