

House Appropriations Committee

February 25, 2025

**HB 980 - Higher Education - Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program
– Eligibility****Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland’s 16 community colleges, supports **HB 980**, which expands eligibility for the Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program to include additional dependents and surviving spouses of disabled veterans. Ensuring that more students have access to financial assistance is critical to making higher education accessible and supporting those who have sacrificed for our country.

Community colleges serve a diverse student population, including many veterans, military-connected students, and their families. Expanding financial aid to the spouses and children of veterans with disabilities removes a major obstacle for these students, helping them afford college and focus on their education. Many military families face unique challenges, and this bill provides essential support to ensure access to affordable, high-quality education at Maryland’s community colleges.

Additionally, HB 980 helps streamline the scholarship process by ensuring that postsecondary institutions can verify eligibility more efficiently. This allows students to access funding without unnecessary delays. Simplifying verification ensures that eligible students receive the assistance they need to enroll, persist, and complete their education.

Investing in financial aid for military families also strengthens Maryland’s workforce and economy. Many students who benefit from this scholarship will enter critical industries, contributing to a skilled workforce that meets the needs of local employers. Community colleges are committed to supporting Maryland’s military community, and HB 980 is an important step toward ensuring that no eligible student is left behind due to financial barriers. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 980**.

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