

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Delegate Cheryl Pasteur, and I am here to speak on behalf of the many undocumented students in Maryland, through HB207 , Undocumented Students- Out of State Tuition Exemption Eligibility. Let me , first, say, “Thank you! Thank You! Thank you!” Last Session, this committee passed this bill, helped with the amendment to it and saw that it was passed in the House. Thank you!

This bill reduces the number of years (from three to two), like Virginia, for which an individual or an individual’s parent or guardian must file a Maryland income tax return prior to the academic year to qualify for an exemption from paying the out-of-state tuition rate under the Maryland Dream Act. There is “minimal fiscal impact” on the State while offering the schools the additional tuitions that come as a result of the additional enrollments. The fiscal note states, “Expanding eligibility generally does not require additional spending...”.

As a side note, I share that this bill is now personal for me since one of the men who died when the Key Bridge was hit was a constituent and someone who was a member of a community church where I frequently visit and support . He had a son who wanted to attend the Community College. We, as a community, worked together to make sure that became a reality for him. Two other men who died, also, had children for whom the State assisted in locating resources for them to attend the Community College.

This bill asks that students who have graduated from our schools and whose parents or the students, themselves, have shown a commitment to this state by paying taxes deserve to pay in-state tuition. I look to you, again, to pass this bill and lead the way for the Senate to do the same this Session. Thank you!

Delegate Cheryl Pasteur