

Senate Bill 268
Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility
Appropriations
January 22, 2025
Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports SB268, which would standardize for all residents of Maryland the number of years an individual, or their parent or guardian, must file a Maryland income tax return prior to the academic year to qualify for an exemption from paying out-of-state tuition under the Maryland Dream Act, changing the requirement from three years to two.

For a century, Catholic Charities has provided care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. We accompany Marylanders as they age with dignity, support their pursuit of employment and career advancement, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success, and welcome immigrant neighbors into Maryland communities. As Maryland's second largest human service providers, we are deeply committed to helping those who need it most.

Since 1963, our Esperanza Center has been a trusted resource for immigrants in Maryland, offering services such as education, healthcare, immigration legal assistance, family reunification, and community support. Every year, we serve thousands of immigrants, guiding them as they build new lives in Maryland.

In alignment with our mission, expanding access to affordable higher education is critical for the personal and professional growth of Maryland's youth, including undocumented students and their families who are residents of Maryland and who are contributing to the economy of our State. Providing access to in-state tuition enables these young people to acquire higher education, develop job skills, and contribute to their families and communities.

The current three-year tax return requirement creates a significant barrier for many immigrant families. This requirement prevents motivated and talented students from qualifying for in-state tuition, thereby limiting their educational opportunities. SB268 addresses this issue by reducing the tax return requirement from three years to two, removing a major obstacle for many students and bringing the requirement into line with other state residents.

For these reasons, Catholic Charities of Baltimore respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 268.

Submitted By: Madelin Martinez, Assistant Advocacy Director