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**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

February 21, 2025

**SB 755 - Higher Education - Student Financial Assistance - Students in Informal Kinship  
Care Relationships**

**Position: Favorable**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, strongly supports **SB 755**, which expands access to financial assistance for students in informal kinship care relationships. As open-enrollment institutions, Maryland's community colleges are committed to ensuring that higher education remains accessible to all students, regardless of their personal or financial circumstances.

For many students, financial barriers are the single greatest obstacle to pursuing a college degree. Students in informal kinship care relationships—those raised by relatives or other caregivers without formal legal guardianship—often face unique financial hardships. Because they do not always meet the standard definition of an independent student, they may be excluded from financial aid eligibility that could otherwise help them afford college. SB 755 corrects this gap by ensuring that these students are recognized as independent for state financial aid purposes, making higher education more attainable for them.

SB 755 directly supports college affordability, degree completion, and workforce development by expanding access to financial assistance. When more students can afford college, more Marylanders will gain the skills and credentials needed for high-demand careers, strengthening the state's workforce and economy. This bill aligns with Maryland's broader goals of increasing college attainment rates and removing barriers that prevent students from reaching their full potential.

Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 755**.

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