



**Maryland Higher Education Commission Testimony
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Bill 762 Maryland Higher Education Commission - Higher Education
Goals - Revisions
April 2, 2025
1:00 PM
Favorable**

Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members.
Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 762.

I am Dr. Sanjay Rai, Secretary for the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

This bill is a departmental bill for the Maryland Higher Education Commission, which would revise Maryland's 2013 completion goal.

More than a decade ago, Maryland took a bold step in setting a statewide postsecondary attainment goal, recognizing that a highly educated workforce is essential to economic competitiveness. The College and Career Readiness and Completion Act of 2013 established the ambitious target that 55% of Marylanders would hold at least an associate degree by 2025.

Our colleges and universities have risen to the challenge. Today, Maryland boasts 727,000 degree holders, with institutions consistently exceeding their individual attainment targets. This progress is a testament to the strength of our system of postsecondary education and its role in fueling Maryland's economy.

However, we are projected to fall just short of the 55% goal. This is not because of institutional performance, but due to factors beyond higher education's direct control, including migration patterns, employment trends, and workforce retention.

Moreover, even if we hit 55%, it will not fully address Maryland's workforce needs, particularly in critical fields such as nursing, healthcare, cybersecurity, and other high-demand industries.

For the past 10 months, we have worked closely with Maryland's colleges and universities, providing data on their progress toward the 2025 goal and identifying areas for improvement, and engaging stakeholders across the education and workforce sectors.

A major milestone in this process was the inaugural Student Success Summit, where we engaged institutions in discussions about the future of higher education in Maryland. Campus reflection reports, submitted in February, affirm that institutions are ready to move forward with an expanded attainment strategy.

Maryland was a national leader in 2013, setting an ambitious goal to drive postsecondary attainment. Today, we have the opportunity to lead again. We must expand our vision to include the full range of postsecondary credentials that fuels our state's economy.

In closing, I am asking for a favorable report on House Bill 762. Investing in these priorities will ensure that Maryland remains at the forefront of higher education, workforce development, and research-driven economic growth. Thank you.