

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 303
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3606 · 301-858-3606
800-492-7122 Ext. 3606
Benjamin.Brooks@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Windsor Mill Office
8419 Liberty Road, Suite B
Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244
410-496-4037

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 713
Institutions of Higher Education – Mandatory Disclosures for New and
Prospective Students (Informed Enrollment Act)

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
March 5, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of this committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 713, the Informed Enrollment Act. Access to higher education is a cornerstone of economic mobility and workforce development, but far too many students make critical postsecondary decisions without sufficient information about college options, costs, and outcomes. Although Maryland has long prioritized broadening college access, access alone does not guarantee success. Unfortunately, many families remain unaware of the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard, an invaluable resource that clearly presents essential data such as the total cost of attendance, average student debt, graduation and retention rates, median salary outcomes, and campus demographics. Instead, some students and their families rely on rankings from sources like U.S. News & World Report, which have been criticized for their reliance on subjective data and potential for manipulation. The lack of awareness about objective, publicly available data risks students choosing institutions that may not align with their academic, financial, or career goals.

SB 713 addresses this issue by requiring Maryland institutions of higher education to prominently display and disseminate information from the College Scorecard. Under this legislation, prospective students and families would find links to the Scorecard on institutional websites and social media accounts, while also hearing about it during recruitment events, orientation, and routine advisement sessions. This ensures that students learn about program offerings, career outcomes, financial aid resources, support services, and campus diversity before making life-altering decisions. Such knowledge is particularly vital in Maryland, where the average student debt is \$43,000—higher than the national average—and where 13.5% of residents carry student debt. Paying for college, often one of the largest expenses for American families, needs to be approached with full awareness of the potential financial burden. By guiding students toward data-driven decisions, we reduce the risk of debilitating debt and underemployment while helping them select institutions and programs that foster success.

This legislation also underscores the importance of institutional accountability. By requiring colleges and universities to proactively share transparent data, SB 713 provides students with the information they need to compare schools and decide which one best serves their goals. Over time, this level of transparency will strengthen Maryland's workforce, ensuring that taxpayer-funded financial aid supports a student population whose decisions align with meaningful employment opportunities and long-term economic well-being.

Because this measure requires only minimal investment by institutions—most of whom can use existing web and advising platforms to share the Scorecard link—it promises to be both cost-effective and highly beneficial. Students who fully understand the implications of pursuing higher education are much more likely to earn their degrees, manage debt responsibly, and secure meaningful employment upon graduation. This not only helps families but also contributes to a healthier state economy and a more efficient use of public resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 713.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Benjamin T. Brooks". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.

Benjamin Brooks