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

February 21, 2025

**SB 552 - Education - High School Graduation Requirements - Financial Aid Application****Position: Favorable**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, strongly supports **SB 552**, which requires public high school students to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) as a graduation requirement, with specific opt-out provisions.

Each year, thousands of students in Maryland miss out on financial aid opportunities simply because they do not complete the FAFSA or MSFAA. Many students, particularly those who would benefit most from financial aid, are unaware of their eligibility or assume they will not qualify. By requiring all students to complete the application process, this legislation ensures that financial aid is not an afterthought but an accessible resource for all students.

Furthermore, normalizing the financial aid application process helps remove the stigma surrounding needing assistance for college. Many students hesitate to apply because they fear judgment or are unfamiliar with the process. Making the completion of the FAFSA and MSFAA a standard practice will help foster a culture in which seeking financial support is seen as a routine and responsible step toward higher education.

Community colleges serve as a primary access point for higher education in Maryland, enrolling a significant number of students from diverse economic backgrounds. Ensuring that every eligible student understands and applies for financial aid will help reduce barriers to college enrollment and completion, ultimately benefiting Maryland's workforce and economy. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 552**.

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