

[SIGNED_2025] SB0082.pdf

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Position: FAV



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office Children
100 Community Place,
Crownsville, MD 21032

Alexander Hossainkhail, *Chair*
Thomas Evans, *Vice-Chair*
Folashade Epebinu, *Secretary*

January 20, 2025

Re: SB82 | College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions Applications - Fees - Prohibition

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders who serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues facing youth.

We are writing in support of **SB82** and requesting a favorable report by the Committee. **SB82** prohibits local boards of education from charging students fees for participating in competitive college preparatory programs, such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses or International Baccalaureate (IB) programs; further, the bill asserts that public universities in the state of Maryland shall not charge application fees to students attending approved public high schools. **SB82** allows high-achieving students to reach their goals more easily by eliminating financial barriers to applying and competing for college admission.

According to the most recently available data, in 2021, 43.6% of Maryland's graduating high school class took at least 1 AP exam¹. Research has shown, and students have demonstrated, that those who participate in AP exams are more likely than their peers to attend college, and graduate on time. Moreover, the University System of Maryland (USM) received 67,076 in-state applicants in 2024, translating to an approximate savings of \$3,689,180 for applicants². **SB82** reduces a primary barrier to entry—the starting point for getting a college degree. It has been shown that waiving college application fees induces high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds to apply to and be admitted to higher education institutions. **SB82** promotes students of all income levels to participate in high-level academic pursuits and to seek out higher education.

There exists a significant opportunity and achievement gap in our state, and financial barriers are a culprit in this issue. The AP participation rate between the three least participating counties was 43% that of the three most participating counties, and the income discrepancy between these same counties can be up to

¹ Choudhury, M. (2022). "Maryland Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Advanced Placement, SAT and Postsecondary Enrollment." *Maryland State Department of Education*
<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0322/AdjustedCohortGraduationRateAdvancedPlacementSATPostsecondaryEnrollment.pdf>

² University System of Maryland Data Journal Reports

100%. Finances are certainly a factor in academic program participation, and **SB82** acts in the best interest of low-income students, and the pursuit of equitable education.

Counties across the state have disproportionate standards when it comes to charging for competitive college preparatory programs. For example, while Montgomery County Public Schools cover the cost of all Advanced Placement exams, Howard County Public Schools charge up to \$98.00 per exam. Without financial constraints, Montgomery County Public School students are more likely to take Advanced Placement exams than Howard County Public Schools. This allows Montgomery County students, on average, greater opportunities to succeed in high school and beyond than their counterparts.

Testing Schedule – HCPSS. www.hcpss.org/academics/testing/testing-schedule.

SB82 allows all Maryland students equal access to AP, IB, and other advanced course exams by eliminating the financial burden on students and their families. The Council advocates for **SB82** as it aligns with the Council's Legislative Platform supporting:

- a. Bridge achievement gaps to ensure youth from diverse backgrounds can access high-level education and career guidance. (Article III, Higher Education, Clauses F, I, and K),
- b. Addressing disproportionate funding in and across districts to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. (Article III, Primary and Secondary Education, Clauses A, C, and G),

SB82 grants, *we the students*, the opportunity to flourish in our education without financial burden. By prohibiting local boards of education from charging student fees for competitive college preparatory programs, Maryland allows students from all different backgrounds equal grounds for schooling and success and helps to alleviate the disproportionate standards across counties. For these reasons, the Maryland Youth Advisory Council **Supports SB82** and requests a favorable report from the committee. We thank you for doing your part to increase access to competitive college preparatory programs for students all across the state.

Sincerely,



Alexander Hossainkhail
Chair, Maryland Youth Advisory Council

Written Testimony for SB 82.pdf

Uploaded by: Alonzo Washington

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 82 - College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions Applications - Fees – Prohibition

SB 82 seeks to address these inequities by eliminating college application fees and the costs associated with preparatory programs, making higher education accessible to all students, regardless of socioeconomic background.

In pursuit of an equitable educational system, we must acknowledge the systemic barriers that prevent many students from reaching their full potential. The state of Maryland, renowned for its progressive educational goals, faces an insidious challenge that undermines its ambition: the financial barriers that restrict access to college preparatory programs and create insurmountable obstacles for low-income students applying to higher education institutions.

The statistics are staggering. In the 2017 school year, college-bound students collectively spent over \$504 million on application fees to four-year colleges, an expenditure that disproportionately burdens students from underserved communities. This figure—half a billion dollars—is a stark reminder of the financial exclusion many students face when considering higher education. Bill 82 aims to remove this barrier, ensuring that all students, particularly those from low-income families, can pursue their academic aspirations without the threat of financial strain.

Moreover, the bill's impact on college preparatory programs cannot be overstated. These programs help equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in a rigorous academic environment. However, fees associated with these programs often deter students from marginalized communities. By prohibiting counties from charging these fees, Bill 82 removes one of the most significant obstacles to academic success for students from underserved backgrounds.

Furthermore, the issue of application fees remains a critical barrier. Many low-income students hesitate to apply to multiple colleges due to the compounding cost of application fees, which can add up quickly when applying to several institutions. By prohibiting public higher education institutions from charging these fees for eligible students, Bill 82 provides a crucial opportunity for students to apply to a wider range of colleges, thereby increasing their chances of finding the best fit for their academic and professional futures.

It is important to note that this bill does not merely address educational inequality but takes a targeted and strategic approach to breaking down the financial barriers that disproportionately affect low-income students and students of color. By eliminating these fees, Bill 82 acts as a force for equity, ensuring that students no longer have to overcome the additional challenge of navigating financial burdens just to pursue a college education.

It is time for Maryland to set an example by removing these financial obstacles and ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to succeed. By passing SB 82, we will be taking a critical step toward a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for our state and nation.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 82.

SB82_MSEA_Lamb_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 82
College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions Applications – Fees -
Prohibition

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
January 22, 2024

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 82, which would prohibit a county board from charging fees to certain students for their participation in an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program or a comparable Advanced Placement coursework. It would also prohibit public colleges and universities in the State from charging students fees related to a college admissions application.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

All students should have the opportunity to take challenging coursework that engages their interests and prepares them for their future pursuits. This bill would ensure that all students, regardless of family income or college and career readiness status, can take advantage of college preparation courses without facing financial barriers. We would encourage clarifying language addressing situations such as non-completion of courses.

This bill would also ensure that Maryland colleges and universities are not charging in-state high school graduates fees to apply. College application fees are an inequitable practice and are increasingly understood as contributing to overwhelming, costly application processes that discourage prospective students.¹ Eliminating such fees is a step to help ensure that all Maryland students can pursue their post-secondary goals.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 82.

¹ Small Nudges Can Improve How Students Apply to College. Harvard Business Review (2016). <https://hbr.org/2016/11/small-nudges-can-improve-how-students-apply-to-college>

SB82_USM_Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: UNF



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of* MARYLAND

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Senate Bill 82

College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions Applications – Fees - Prohibition January 22, 2025 Unfavorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 82. The bill would make certain college preparatory programs free and prohibits Maryland public institutions of higher education from charging Maryland high school graduates college admission application fees.

The USM is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional higher education centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

The USM strategic plan, Vision 2030, has a goal to have USM reflect the full diversity of the state. USM institutions engage in extensive outreach to engage young people from under-resourced communities across the state so they are encouraged to pursue higher education. Once students are admitted, our institutions work hard to provide need-based aid, and over half of all students leave with no debt. The USM has a genuine commitment to access.

The USM appreciates the bill's intention to make college applications affordable for everyone. Indeed, USM institutions all have a fee waiver process so low-income students do not have to pay for our college applications. Those that participate in the Common Application also use its fee waiver process. High school counselors and community-based organizations are familiar with this process, and institutions' web pages make the information easy to find. But many tens of thousands of applicants can afford application fees, and the fiscal impact of this bill is prohibitive for our institutions. The University of Maryland, College Park receives about 60,000 college applications, and it alone would see an impact of upwards of \$2 million. This kind of fiscal impact cannot be supported in a year when the USM budget will be cut by over \$100 million dollars. At a time when our institutions are doing their best to keep down costs, this bill would force service cuts or an increase in other costs that could impact all students. Because of this fiscal impact, the USM respectfully opposes this legislation.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our position on Senate Bill 82.



SMCM SB82 INFO Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Brandon Engle

Position: INFO

Senate Bill 82
College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions Applications - Fees - Prohibition
January 22, 2025

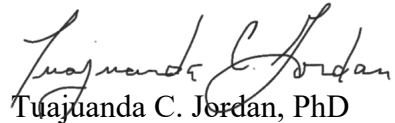
Letter of Information

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share St. Mary's College of Maryland's analysis of Senate Bill 82. In general, this bill prohibits a county board from charging a student (or their parents) any fee related to the enrollment in or completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program or comparable Advanced Placement courses. The bill also prohibits public colleges and universities in the state of Maryland from charging any fee associated with an application for admission to graduates of public high schools in the state.

As the state's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland offers a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible for academically talented students from a broad spectrum of socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Although the College does charge a \$50 application fee, the Office of Admission participates in the Common Application's comprehensive fee waiver program for students depending on their income or participation in local, state, or federal programs for low-income students. The College also offers a significant number of fee waivers each to students from a variety of backgrounds – including first-generation students, active duty service members or veterans, low-income students who do not apply through the Common Application, as well as participants in on-campus recruitment events – in order to incentivize their application to the College. For the Fall 2023 application cohort, approximately 40% of applicants received a fee waiver; for the Fall 2024 application cohort, that figure is approximately 46%.

Consistent with our mission, St. Mary's College of Maryland remains supportive of state-wide initiatives to expand access to higher education for Maryland students. However, Committee members should note that the prohibition of application fees would result in a significant loss in annual revenue for the College; additionally, if the elimination of application fees leads to a significant increase in applications each year, operational impacts to the Office of Admission would similarly increase.

St. Mary's College of Maryland remains committed to offering a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible to a broad spectrum of Maryland students. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tuajuanda C. Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tuajuanda C. Jordan, PhD

President