

Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Pro

Uploaded by: Derrick Coley

Position: FAV



Maryland Higher Education Commission

Education, Energy and the Environment

Senate Bill 597

Higher Education - Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program - Eligible Institutions

February 19, 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 Senate Bill 597. I am Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary at the Maryland Higher Education Commission. I want to thank Senator Corderman for sponsoring the bill

This bill would expand the Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine (MSOM) as an eligible higher education institution.

MSOM received conditional approval on August 28, 2025 to operate in Maryland as a private, non-profit institution. MSOM is owned and operated by Maryland-based Meritus Health (based in Hagerstown, Maryland) and is funded by the Meritus Health System. MSOM is focused on educating future doctors to practice osteopathic medicine in rural and underserved areas in Western Maryland and other rural areas of the State. They expect to welcome their first class of 90 students this July.

Per the conditions of their approval, MSOM must maintain a financial guarantee (as required by regulation), pass a second MHEC on-site evaluation at the end of their first instructional year (to ensure they remain in compliance with regulatory standards), and obtain accreditation from an accreditor recognized by the US Department of Education within eight years. MSOM achieved pre-accreditation status with the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) on September 10, 2024.

MSOM provided the following summary in their application materials to MHEC: *MSOM is intended to serve constituents predominantly located in Maryland and the tri-state region surrounding Washington County and will be focused on rural and underserved areas in Western Maryland and other rural areas of Maryland, which will benefit from the presence of MSOM*

students in their local practice-based and hospital-based settings. MSOM's research focus will encompass a broad array of health status and chronic illness that disproportionately impact the demographics the institution will serve within its immediate service area. MSOM will form partnerships with Maryland and other tri-state colleges to form pathway programs for prospective applicants to jumpstart their academic journey into medicine.

MHEC recognizes the work undertaken by Meritus, Washington County's largest health care provider, to train future doctors in the area due to the physician shortage and aging physician population in the area. In closing, MHEC supports Senate Bill 597 and asks the Committee for a favorable report.

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Senate Bill 597 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Joel Huffer

Position: FAV



Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine

11116 Medical Campus Rd

Hagerstown, MD 21742

301.790.8000

February 6, 2025

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

I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 597, which seeks to expand eligibility for the Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include students attending the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine (MSOM). As the Chief Operating Officer of MSOM, I urge you to pass this crucial legislation that will benefit Maryland residents pursuing medical education within our state.

Equity for Maryland Students

The current exclusion of MSOM from the scholarship program creates a potential disincentive for Maryland citizens to choose to attend this Maryland institution. Without this change, our students cannot access the same financial benefits available to their peers at other Maryland medical. This disparity penalizes Maryland residents with high financial need who wish to pursue their medical education at MSOM, potentially forcing them to seek education out-of-state.

Financial Relief for Students, Not the Institution

It is important to emphasize that MSOM does not stand to profit from this change. Our institution will receive the same tuition regardless of whether this bill passes. The sole beneficiaries of this legislation are the residents of Maryland - our students - who will receive this much-needed financial relief.

Estimated Impact

To provide context on the potential impact of this legislation:

- Our goal is to attract as many Marylanders as possible to our program.
- Currently, 30% of our accepted students are in-state residents.
- When fully rolled out, our total class size will be 180 students.
- Therefore, we anticipate approximately 60 in-state students per year in the long term.
- Of these 60 students, we expect a proportional number to be eligible for this student aid, comparable to other medical colleges in Maryland.

Investing in Maryland's Future Healthcare Workforce

Passing SB 597 is an investment in the future of healthcare in Maryland. By providing equal access to financial aid for MSOM students, we can:

1. Encourage more Maryland residents to pursue medical education within the state
2. Reduce the financial burden on our future physicians
3. Increase the likelihood that these students will remain in Maryland to practice after graduation

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 597. This legislation will level the playing field for Maryland residents choosing to attend MSOM, provide crucial financial support to our students, and ultimately contribute to a stronger healthcare workforce for our state. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Lehr".

Dave Lehr

Chief Operating Officer

Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine

SB 597 - Senator Corderman Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

PAUL D. CORDERMAN
Legislative District 2
Frederick and Washington Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Education, Business and Administration



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 19, 2025

Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Chair Brian J. Feldman
Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 597 to you today. Senate Bill 597 will expand eligibility for the Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include students attending the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine. This is an important step in ensuring that more Maryland students have access to vital financial assistance when pursuing advanced degrees in critical fields such as osteopathic medicine.

The Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine offers a unique and essential pathway for students seeking careers in healthcare, especially in underserved communities. Expanding the scholarship program to include this institution not only aids in diversifying the healthcare workforce but will also provide crucial support for students pursuing degrees in osteopathic medicine, which are increasingly in demand across the state.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 597.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P.D. Corderman".

Paul D. Corderman
District 2 – Washington & Frederick Counties

BOCC Letter of Support SB597.pdf

Uploaded by: Rosalinda Pascual

Position: FAV



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 7, 2025

Senator Brian Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **Support for Senate Bill 597- Higher Education-Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program**

Dear Senator Feldman:

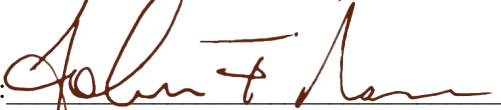
The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (the “Board”) unanimously support the passage of SB 597. The proposed bill would expand the eligible institutions for which Maryland residents can utilize the Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine in Hagerstown, Maryland. In doing so, the State will encourage the retention of Maryland’s best and brightest minds, increase the quality of professional services available in an underserved area of Maryland and, finally, increase Maryland’s tax base.

This bill will provide an incentive for Maryland residents to attend Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine and increase the total percentage of Maryland enrollees. Scholastic trends demonstrate that a substantial percentage of graduates remain in the metropolitan area of their university. This effect is compounded when graduates attend a university in their home state. According to a study conducted by the Meritus Health System in 2022, Washington County ranks amongst the most medically underserved communities in the State of Maryland. Supporting the expansion of a scholarship grant for Maryland residents who choose to attend the newly opened Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine will increase the percentage of graduates who choose to remain in Washington County following their graduation. This will in turn lead to higher quality professional services for the citizens of Washington County as well as a robust tax base for the State and County.

We ask that you invest in the future prosperity of Washington County and the State of Maryland by supporting SB 597.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: 
John F. Barr, President



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

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WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

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