

# **SB 1024 MCPA MSA-in-state-county-tuition-public sa**

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair and  
Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

**FROM:** Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Samira A. Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

**DATE:** March 11, 2025

**RE:** **SB 1024: Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees**

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT** SB 1024. This bill clarifies that a financially dependent child who may reside in another state or another county whose parent is a state or local public safety official who dies in the line of duty is exempt from paying the out-of-state or out-of-county tuition rate at a public institution of higher education in Maryland.

Public safety professionals dedicate their lives to protecting and serving the people of Maryland. Tragically, some of these brave individuals do not return home. Their families, already burdened with immeasurable loss, should not also face financial barriers to higher education.

SB 1024 aligns with and builds upon similar legislation enacted across the country, including in Maryland where the dependents are residents. Children of law enforcement who do not live in the state of Maryland should be no exception. The legislation recognizes the sacrifices made and extends these benefits so that children of fallen heroes can pursue their academic and professional aspirations without undue financial burden.

For these reasons, the MCPA and MSA respectfully request a **favorable report** on SB 1024.

# **SB1024 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bradley Klukas

Position: FAV

**Chairman Feldman and Distinguished Members of the Committee,**

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Howard County Fire and Rescue Local 2000 in support of SB-1024, and respectfully request a favorable report.

Many of Maryland's dedicated firefighters reside outside the state. In the unfortunate event that a firefighter loses their life in the line of duty, particularly due to a work-related illness such as cancer, it is crucial that we take all necessary steps to ensure their families are supported. Currently, when a firefighter succumbs to cancer, the family is not eligible for Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) from the federal government.

Moreover, children of these fallen heroes should not be penalized for seeking an education in the state where their parent served. We must prioritize ensuring that these children have access to educational opportunities without facing financial barriers, so they can thrive and fulfill the aspirations their parent would have wanted for them.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Brad Klukas  
Howard County Fire and Rescue  
Local 2000

# **Senate Bill 1024 (2025) PFFMD Testimony - J. Buddl**

Uploaded by: Jeffrey Buddle

Position: FAV



**March 11, 2025**

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

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Re: SB1024 Higher Education – Nonresident Tuition – Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

The Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland represents more than 10,000 active and retired professional fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel who proudly serve the citizens of the State of Maryland.

I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of the proposed legislation that grants in-state tuition benefits to the surviving dependents of Maryland’s public safety employees who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty. This measure is a meaningful and necessary step in recognizing the sacrifices made by these dedicated professionals and ensuring that their families receive the support they deserve.

Every day, Maryland’s firefighters, emergency medical personnel, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and members of the Maryland National Guard put their lives on the line to protect and serve our communities. Their commitment to public safety comes with inherent risks, and tragically, some do not return home to their families. When such a loss occurs, it leaves behind not only an irreplaceable void but also significant financial and emotional burdens on their surviving dependents.

This legislation would provide in-state and in-county tuition benefits for those dependents, granting them the opportunity to pursue an education at any public institution of higher education within the State of Maryland. By removing financial barriers to education, we can ensure that the children and dependents of our fallen heroes have the chance to build a stable and prosperous future.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) would oversee the implementation of this program, developing an application process and verifying eligibility in coordination with the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System and other relevant agencies. The benefits would be granted only to those who meet the admission requirements of the respective institutions, ensuring that recipients are prepared for academic success.

This initiative is not only an act of gratitude but also a demonstration of Maryland's unwavering commitment to those who serve and protect. Supporting the families of fallen public safety employees is both a moral obligation and a practical investment in our community. Furthermore, this benefit imposes little to no financial burden on the state while yielding invaluable benefits to affected families and society as a whole.

On behalf of the members of Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, we strongly urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 1023.

Submitted respectfully,



Jeffrey Buddle, President  
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

*The membership of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland includes 25 IAFF local affiliates from the following jurisdictions:*

*Federal: Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Fort George G. Meade, National Capital Federal Fire Fighters*

*State: Baltimore / Washington International Airport*

*Local: Annapolis City, Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City (2 affiliates), Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Charles County, Cumberland City, Frederick County, Garrett County, Hagerstown, Howard County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince Georges County, Queen Annes County, Salisbury, Talbot County, Worcester County*

# **Meritus.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Alcorn

Position: FAV





REIMBURSEMENT FORM

\*\*\*Proof of Payment Required for All Reimbursements\*\*\*

- 1. Payment to Meritus Employee:  Yes  No If Yes, Complete Section A
- 2. Payment to Trivergent Employee:  Yes  No If Yes, Complete Sections A & B (Home Address)
- 3. Payment to Other:  Yes  No If Yes, Complete Section B

Section A—Payment to Meritus Employee (Reimbursement through Payroll)

Employee Name: Jennifer Alcorn Dept: TMS Date: 10/4/2023

Reason for Reimbursement (Itemized receipts and backup must be attached: Student Career Fair mileage to WVU for Rehab

Mileage: 286 Miles @ 0.655 Per Mile \*\*\*Reimbursable Upon Return Only \$ 187.33

Destination West Virginia University (Mapquest/Google maps attached)

Meals: (Number of meals)

Lodging: (Number of nights) Confirmation #

Other Reimbursable Expenses:

Registration / Dues / Prof. License:

Total Reimbursement Requested: \$ 187.33

Please allow 3 weeks from date of submission for processing.

Manager: All above expenses will be charged to the employee's home cost center, unless noted otherwise:

Section B—Payment to Other & Trivergent Employees (Payment through Accounts Payable)

Check Payable to:

Remittance Address:

Reason for Payment:

Amt\$ Account #:
Amt\$ Account #:
Amt\$ Account #:
Amt\$ Account #:

Total Payment\$

\*\*\*2 Signatures are Required\*\*\*

Requested By: Jennifer Alcorn

Supervisor Approval:

Administrative Approval:

**Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Printer.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Alcorn

Position: FAV

DL

Class  
C Driver's License

Maryland

LIC #: ~~A-426-398-488-959~~



JENNIFER LAUREN ALCORN  
2126 WALNUT RIDGE CT  
FREDERICK F MD 21702

*Jennifer Alcorn*

BIRTH DATE: **12-18-1981**  
EXPIRES: **12-18-2022**  
Sex: F HT: 5-07 WT: 165  
Restr: Type: R  
Issue Date: 03-12-2015



**MVA**

Motor Vehicle Administration  
A426398488959  
DRIVER LICENSE / SOUND EX NO.

6601 Rlitchie Highway, N.E.  
Glen Burnie, MD 21062

02/15/17  
DATE

JENNIFER LAUREN ALCORN  
7947 HOLLOW RD  
MIDDLETOWN MD 21769

THIS IS A CORRECTION ATTACHMENT ONLY

# March 7, 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Portz

Position: FAV

March 7, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Maryland General Assembly  
11 Bladen St.  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB1024 - Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

Dear Senator Feldman and Senator Kagan,

My name is Jessica Portz, I am the widow of Officer Thomas Portz of the Baltimore City Police Department EOW 10-20-2010. I would like to tell you about things that my family has gone through and the things that were told to me after the death of my husband.

The day after my husband's death and for days weeks and years after, we were told that my family would be taken care of, that my children would not have to worry about college because there were programs and scholarships in place to take care of these things. All of this was told to me while I was sitting in the living room of my home in York County Pennsylvania. These things were not entirely true, not to say that I was lied to but the information was not completely accurate. The scholarship in place was for the families of Maryland State employees that lost their lives in the line of duty but did not apply to my children because even though he served the City of Baltimore we did not reside in the state of Maryland. With help from some wonderful people we were able to make it so that any surviving child of a Maryland agency would be eligible for this scholarship. My daughter then went on to attend the University of Towson, with the assistance of this scholarship. Unfortunately it was still a great financial hardship for myself because the scholarship only covers the cost of instate tuition and we again live in Pennsylvania so were charged out of state tuition.

We do not ask for a great deal from anyone, we do not demand to be taken care of or look for anything unreasonable, but we have been told for years that this would be something that would be available to us. We are a few numbers that would benefit from this exemption, and only look for what was told we were to receive.

Thank you for considering this legislation. I respectfully ask the Environment and Transportation Committee for a favorable report of SB1024.

Sincerely,

*Jessica Portz*

Jessica Portz  
Widow of Officer Thomas Portz  
Baltimore City Police Department  
Western District  
EOW 10-20-2010

# **Letter of support SB1024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

**MIKE MCKAY**  
*Legislative District 1*  
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 416  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3565 · 301-858-3565  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3565  
Mike.McKay@senate.state.md.us

Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Executive Nominations Committee

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

RE: Fire/EMS Coalition Support for Senate Bill 1024

Dear Chair Hettleman, Vice Chairman Ellis, and Members of the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

The Fire/EMS Coalition would like to express their support for Senate Bill 1024: **Higher Education – Nonresident Tuition – Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heros Tuition Benefits Act)**. This bill seeks to ease the financial burden of out-of-state or out-of-county tuition at a public institution of higher education in this state for students financially dependent on certain state or local public safety employees who've died in the line of duty.

The Coalition supports Senate Bill 1024 as a means of honoring our fallen heroes by supporting their children through higher education so that we may make their lives a little easier after their parent's great sacrifice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mike McKay'.

Senator Mike McKay  
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland  
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

**Voting Organizations:**

**Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA)**  
**Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA)**  
**State Fire Marshal (OSFM)**  
**Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI)**  
**Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMMS)**  
**Metro Fire Chief's Association**  
**Professional Firefighters of Maryland**

***Our Mission Statement***

The Maryland Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation;



rather Coalition members are asked to offer support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.

# **SB 1024 - Senator Corderman Testimony Fin.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



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 403  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3903 · 301-858-3903  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3903  
Paul.Corderman@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 11, 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 1024 to you today. SB 1024 will provide in-state tuition benefits to the surviving dependents of public safety employees who died in the line of duty while serving Maryland state or local agencies within the Maryland Public Safety Article. Eligibility would be limited to surviving dependents of public safety professionals who have died in the line of duty while employed by a Maryland state or local government agency.

Providing in-state tuition benefits to the surviving dependents of Public Service Officers ensures that their families are supported in achieving educational and economic stability after a tragic loss. It reinforces Maryland's commitment to honoring its fallen heroes and sustaining a culture of respect and gratitude for those who dedicate their lives to public service. Additionally, this is a low-cost benefit to offer for Maryland public safety employers.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 1024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Corderman".

Paul D. Corderman  
District 2 – Washington & Frederick Counties

**00b143c0-8509-4e55-81a4-99b4a34ccdaf.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Laird

Position: FAV

Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program and Jean B. Crvor Memorial Scholarship Program  
 13B.08.13.03  
<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13b/13b.08.13.03.htm>

.03 Eligibility

Various Eligibility Status

C (1) Be at least 16 years old and the child of a member of the armed forces who:	(2) Be a prisoner of war or missing in action	(3) Be either:	(4) Be either:	(5) Be a veteran, as defined under State Government Article, §9-901, Annotated Code of Maryland, who:	(6) Be the surviving spouse of a member of the armed forces	(7) Be at least 16 years old and the child of or the surviving spouse	(8) Be at least 16 years old and the child of a school employee who, as a result of an act of violence:	(9) Be the surviving spouse of a school employee who, as a result of an act of violence:
---	---	----------------	----------------	---	---	---	---	--

(a) Died as a result of military service after December 7, 1941;	if that occurred on or after January 1, 1960, as a result of the Vietnam conflict, and a resident of this State at the time the person was declared to be a prisoner of war or missing in action;	(a) At least 16 years old and the child of any State or local public safety employee killed in the line of duty; <b>or</b>	(a) A disabled public safety employee;	(a) Suffers a service connected disability of 25 percent(%) or greater; <b>and</b>	who suffered a service connected 100(%) percent permanent disability;	of a victim of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks;	(a) Died in the line of duty; <b>or</b>	(a) Died in the line of duty; <b>or</b>
(b) Suffered a service connected 100 percent permanent disability after December 7, 1942; <b>or</b>		(b) The surviving spouse of any State or local public safety employee killed in the line of duty;	(b) At least 16 years old and the child of a disabled public safety employee who sustains an injury in the line of duty that renders the public safety employee 100(%) percent disabled; <b>or</b>	(b) Has exhausted or is no longer eligible for federal veterans' educational benefits;			b) Sustained an injury in the line of duty that rendered the school employee 100(%) percent disabled; <b>or</b>	(b) Sustained an injury in the line of duty that rendered the school employee 100(%) percent disabled.
(c) Was declared to be a prisoner of war or missing in action, if that occurred on or after January 1, 1960, as a result of the Vietnam conflict, and if the child was born prior to or while the parent was a prisoner of war or missing in action;			(c) The surviving spouse of a disabled public safety employee who sustains an injury in the line of duty that renders the public safety employee 100(%) percent disabled;					

Eligibility Requirements by Category

**cond.doc.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Laird

Position: FAV

**EDWARD T. AND MARY A. CONROY  
& JEAN B. CRYOR  
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**  
Conditions of Award  
Academic Year 2023-2024



**Purpose:**

The purpose of the Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program is to provide student financial assistance to certain individuals due to their eligible military or public safety service or due to their eligible family or marital relationship to such an individual.

The purpose of the Jean B. Cryor Memorial Scholarship Program is to provide student financial assistance to eligible children and surviving spouses of school employees who, as a victim in an act of violence occurring in the line of duty, either died or sustained an injury that rendered the school employee 100 percent disabled.

**Definitions:**

- Child/children means a son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter.
- Disabled public safety employee means a State or local public safety employee who sustains an injury in the line of duty that: (1) Precludes the individual from continuing to serve or be employed as a State or local public safety employee; and (2) In the case of a volunteer member of a fire department, ambulance, or rescue squad or company, precludes the member from continuing to be employed in the nonpublic safety occupation in which the member was engaged at the time of injury.
- School employee includes an employee of public or nonpublic school in the State.
- Service connected means with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated, or that the death resulted from a disability incurred or aggravated, in the line of duty in the active military.
- State or local public safety employee means a person who is a: (1) Career or volunteer member of a fire department, ambulance, or rescue squad or company; (2) Law enforcement officer; (3) Correctional officer; or (4) Member of the Maryland National Guard who was a resident of this State at the time of death.
- Surviving spouse means a person who has not remarried.
- Victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks” means a Maryland resident who was killed as a result of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, the attack on the Pentagon in Virginia, or the crash of United Airlines flight #93 in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

You must be:

- A Maryland resident, and if a dependent, your parents must also be Maryland residents.  
**NOTE:** The following persons are not required to be a resident of Maryland at the time of application or at the time of the disabling or fatal event: public safety employees; or spouses and children of public safety employees who were killed in the line of duty or who sustains an injury, in the line of duty that rendered the public safety employee 100 percent disabled.
- The son, daughter, or stepchild of a member of the United States armed forces who is deceased as a result of military service or who suffered a service connected 100 percent permanent disability as a result of military service; or,
- The surviving spouse of a member of the United States Armed Forces who suffered a service-connected 100% permanent disability as result of military service;
- A veteran who suffers a service connected disability of 25 percent or greater as a result of military service and has exhausted or is no longer eligible for Federal veterans’ educational benefits; or,
- The son, daughter, or stepchild or surviving spouse of a victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks who died as a result of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, the attack on the Pentagon in Virginia, or the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 in Pennsylvania; or,
- A POW/MIA of the Vietnam Conflict or his/her son, daughter, or stepchild; or,
- The son, daughter, or stepchild or surviving spouse of a State or local public safety employee or volunteer who died in the line of duty or who sustained an injury in the line of duty that rendered the public safety or employee or volunteer 100 percent disabled;
- A State or local public safety employee or volunteer who became 100 percent disabled in the line of duty.
- The son, daughter, stepchild, or surviving spouse of a school employee who, as a result of an act of violence either died in the line of duty or sustained an injury in the line of duty that rendered the school employee 100% disabled.

**Persons Eligible for Scholarship:**

- You must be at least 16 years old and enroll at an eligible postsecondary institution in Maryland, as follows:
  - Full-time (12+ credits per semester) or part-time (6-11 credits per semester) undergraduate; or
  - Full-time (9+ credits per semester) or part-time (6-8 credits per semester) graduate student; or professional program.
  - Be enrolled in a 2-year terminal certificate program in which the coursework is acceptable for transfer credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible institution; or
  - Be enrolled in a private career school.

**NOTE: If the student fails to meet any of these eligibility requirements, the award will be canceled.**

**Use and Amount of Scholarship Award:**

- The scholarship awarded may be used for the tuition and mandatory fees at any eligible institution; and may not
- Exceed the equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of a resident undergraduate at a 4-year public institution of higher education within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland University College and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, with the highest annual expenses for a full-time resident undergraduate.
- as determined by your school's financial aid office; and
- Be less than the lesser of \$3,000, or
- The equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of a resident of the institution attended by the recipient of the scholarship.

**NOTE:** Award amounts may not reflect subsequent tuition and fee increases made throughout the academic year.

**Awards are subject to the availability of funds.**

**Awarding:**

- No more than 15 Conroy-Cryor scholarships may be awarded annually to Veterans who suffer from a service connected disability of 25 percent or greater; and has exhausted or is no longer eligible for federal veterans' educational benefits.
- Awards to the sons, daughters, stepchildren, or spouses of victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks may not exceed the amount specified when combined with any other scholarships received by a student based on the student's status as a child or spouse of a victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

**Overawards:** Please be aware that if the institution you are attending notifies OSFA that you are receiving other financial assistance that causes you to exceed your financial need for the award or exceed the cost of attendance at the institution (e.g.: private scholarships; Veteran's Benefits; athletic scholarships), your State financial aid may be reduced or cancelled.

**Renewal Requirements:**

- Awards will be renewed if recipients continue to meet eligibility requirements as outlined above and maintain the satisfactory academic progress standards of at the institution each year.
- Awards shall continue to be renewed until the recipient completes their program of study or are otherwise no longer eligible for the award.
- The scholarship may be renewed on an annual basis for up to 5 years of full-time study or 8 years of part-time study if the recipient:
  - Is enrolled on at least a part-time basis in an eligible Maryland postsecondary institution; and
  - Continues to meet all other eligibility requirements.

**NOTE:** As a condition of receiving a Maryland State scholarship or grant, you pledge to remain drug free for the full term of the award. Unlawful use of drugs and alcohol may endanger your enrollment in a Maryland college, as well as your Maryland financial aid award.

**Award Payment:**

The institution is required to fund all eligible students and are then reimbursed by the State. If funds cannot be reimbursed in the fiscal year in which awards are made, priority will be given to reimbursing funds for those awards in the following fiscal year. Institutions may not hold funds from eligible students, while waiting for funds from the State.



**sb1024laird.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Laird

Position: FAV

March 7, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Maryland General Assembly  
11 Bladen St.  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB1024 - Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

Dear Senator Feldman and Senator Kagan,

My husband, Battalion Chief Josh Laird, served Frederick County, Maryland's citizens for 21 years. He was killed in the line of duty on August 11, 2021, while fighting a house fire in Ijamsville, Maryland. In the days and weeks after his death, I met with representatives from the Frederick County Government, the Frederick County Department of Fire and Rescue Services, IAFF Local 3666, and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation regarding various benefits. During these conversations, I was told that my children could attend any Maryland State school of higher education, and their tuition would be free.

At the time, college tuition was not at the top of my list of concerns. My oldest daughter had just started high school, and I had been employed at Mount Saint Mary's University for 18 years, which meant I would be at the top of the seniority list for the tuition exchange program. Additionally, as a Mount Saint Mary's University employee, my children could attend the Mount at no cost. Unfortunately, a few months after returning to my role as the Chief Technology Officer, I had to make the tough decision to step down from my full-time position. I realized that my new reality was that of a grieving widow and single mother trying to care for two grieving children. I remained at the Mount in a part-time capacity for the next fourteen months, at which time I was laid off.

A few months after this, I began seeking information regarding the Maryland Line of Duty Death tuition program. I discovered this benefit is called the Conroy Scholarship and is administered by the Maryland Department of Higher Education. The following is what I found regarding eligibility for the Conroy Scholarship.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

You must be:

- A Maryland resident, and if a dependent, your parents must also be Maryland residents.  
**NOTE:** The following persons are not required to be a resident of Maryland at the time of application or at the time of the disabling or fatal event: public safety employees; or spouses and children of public safety employees who were killed in the line of duty or who sustains an injury, in the line of duty that rendered the public safety employee 100 percent disabled.

Based on this information, I was relieved and felt my children's college education was secure. However, some months later, I spoke with Jessica Portz, widow of Officer Thomas Portz Jr, who was killed in the line of duty while working for the Baltimore City Police Department in 2010. Jessica and I also have another commonality beyond losing our husbands in the line of duty. We are both residents of the State of Pennsylvania and were so at the time of our husband's deaths.

Jessica had the same understanding as I did that her children would receive free tuition at any Maryland state institution of higher education. In early 2020, Jessica's oldest daughter was accepted at Towson University. She was then informed that her daughter was not eligible for the Conroy Scholarship because they lived in Pennsylvania. The FOP worked very quickly, and on March 18, 2020, HB0596 was passed, which changed the eligibility to allow for out-of-state residency for surviving children and spouses of Maryland public safety employees killed in the line of duty or who were 100% disabled.

Unfortunately, eligibility is only half of the problem. The Conroy Scholarship also has restrictions for the maximum award and use, which are as follows.

**Use and Amount of Scholarship Award:**

- The scholarship awarded may be used for the tuition and mandatory fees at any eligible institution; and may not
- Exceed the equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of a resident undergraduate at a 4-year public institution of higher education within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland University College and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, with the highest annual expenses for a full-time resident undergraduate.
- as determined by your school's financial aid office; and
- Be less than the lesser of \$3,000, or
- The equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of a resident of the institution attended by the recipient of the scholarship.

This makes the Conroy Scholarship unusable for anyone who lives out of state. For the 2024-2025 academic year, the in-state tuition at the University of Maryland is \$10,087.00, while the out-of-state tuition at the University of Maryland is \$39,464.00. This means the expected out-of-pocket after the Conroy Scholarship would be \$29,377 plus room and board. Additionally, the Conroy Scholarship has a restriction that means if a student receives additional tuition scholarships, the amount awarded by the Conroy Scholarship will be reduced.

Ultimately, Jessica had to seek alternative funding sources for her daughter's college education. However, if SB1024 passes this year, my oldest daughter will be able to receive the benefits as intended. As will my younger daughter and Jessica's son. It will also prevent future surviving families from navigating this barrier. Thankfully, public safety employee line-of-duty deaths occur rarely. However, many Maryland public safety employees live in a bordering state, often due to the cost of living. Thirty-four percent of the firefighters who work for Frederick County Department of Fire and Rescue Services live out of state.

I believe this coverage gap was not intentional but an unfortunate oversight. My daughter is less than two months from the deadline to commit to college. Even with her father dying two weeks before she started high school, she has managed to excel, maintaining a GPA above 3.8 and

participating in sports, music, theater, and the National Honor Society. Please correct this oversight and help her pursue her college education.

Thank you for considering this legislation. I respectfully ask the Environment and Transportation Committee for a favorable report on SB1024.

Sincerely,

*Sara Laird*

Sara Laird  
Widow of Battalion Chief Joshua Laird

# **SB 1024 Frederick County Career Firefighters Suppo**

Uploaded by: Stephen Jones

Position: FAV



Career Fire Fighters Association of Frederick County, MD Inc.  
International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3666  
Affiliated with:  
Maryland State Professional Fire Fighters Association and The Central Maryland Labor Council / AFL-CIO



## SUPPORT

**SB 1024: Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)**

**Sponsored by: Senator Corderman**

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

**Hearing 3/11 at 1:00 p.m.**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

I write as the President of the Career Firefighters Association of Frederick County, Maryland (IAFF Local 3666) - Frederick County's public employee organization that represents the over 600 men and women employed with the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue. I am writing to express my support for SB 1024.

This legislation would offer a new death benefit for Maryland's public safety professionals who perish in the line of duty. On August 11, 2021, Battalion Chief Josh Laird made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty while protecting the people of Maryland. Josh's family, his brothers and sisters in our Department, and the citizens of Frederick County grieve his loss every day.

Respectfully, those we have lost in the line of duty didn't serve a single county or city—they served Maryland. These sacrifices are not limited by state lines, and the benefits owed to their families should not be either. By passing SB1024, this Committee will ensure that the dependents of fallen first responders, regardless of where they reside, receive the in-state tuition assistance that recognizes their loss and honors their parent's sacrifice.

We urge this committee to issue a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

Stephen Jones, President, IAFF Local 3666

Contact: Katie Nash  
katie@energyadvocacy.com  
301.524.9142

**SB1024 Written Testimony from Thomas E. Coe 030725**

Uploaded by: Tom Coe

Position: FAV



# FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

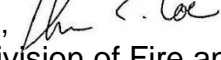
## DIVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

Office of the Chief

Jessica Fitzwater  
County Executive

Thomas E. Coe, Chief

### SB1024 - Higher Education – Nonresident Tuition – Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

Written Testimony from: Chief Thomas E. Coe,   
Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services

Position: Favorable

Committee: Education, Energy, Environment

Date: March 7, 2025

---

Numerous public safety employees who risk their lives everyday to protect Marylanders live outside of our state. When the unthinkable happens and a first responder loses their life in the line of duty in Maryland, sometimes their surviving family members fall through the cracks of certain benefits that are provided to the survivors of our fallen heroes.

On August 11, 2021, the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services lost Battalion Chief Josh Laird. Battalion Chief Laird died in the line of duty while operating on the scene of a house fire in the Ijamsville area of Frederick County. Josh was survived by his wife and two school aged daughters.

Josh's oldest daughter is about to graduate high school and is actively working on planning for college. While she is eligible for the Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program, she would still be responsible to pay tens of thousand dollars to attend a Maryland University as she resides in Fairfield, Pennsylvania.

Through Josh's selfless service to Marylander's his children should receive the same line of duty death benefits as those families who reside in Maryland. Senate Bill 1024 will fix that issue by exempting a financially dependent child of a state or local public safety employee who dies as a result of or in the course of performance of duties from paying out-of-state or out-of-county tuition at a public institution of higher education in the state.

In support of the surviving families Maryland's fallen heroes, I urge a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 1024.