



February 25, 2025

Good Afternoon, Madame Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.

My name is Joseph Fisher. I am the Founder and CEO of First Generation College Bound. I also serve as the Chair of the Maryland Alliance for College Affordability and Equity. Maryland Alliance is a group of non-profit organizations throughout Maryland that assist and support students from low-income - first generation families pursuing a higher education.

I am pleased to testify on behalf of the Maryland Alliance to support **HB688 High School Graduation Requirements-Financial Aid Application.**

This legislation promotes and supports FAFSA/MSFAA Completing which we greatly recognized the need. Maryland Alliance has more than 35 years practicing FAFSA Completion. It has contributed greatly to our success promoting college affordability to our students and their parents. Completing the FAFSA, with our encouragement and support especially to our low income students has enabled them to attend college and graduate with little to no debt. This is due to the FAFSA being completed on time and the results making them eligible for Federal, State, and College Financial Aid they were not aware.

In closing, Maryland Alliance supports HB688 for FAFSA/MSFAA completion as it will contribute greatly to more students attending an affordable college and graduating. However, Maryland Alliance will be concerned about required regulations if any. This is due to our knowledge, and years of experience with FAFSA completion and knowing the challenges of our schools, especially counselors. As a result Maryland Alliance is requesting an opportunity to provide input for regulation input. We know with the right regulations our Maryland Schools will not be too overwhelmed to achieve FAFSA/MSSFA completion with

The Maryland Alliance for College Affordability and Equity is a coalition of nonprofit organizations providing student assistance to 85,000 families throughout every county in the state of Maryland.

Advocates for Children and Youth
CASA de Maryland
College Tracks, Inc.
CollegeBound Foundation
Community Youth Advance, Inc.
End Time Harvest Ministries
FAME – Foundation for the Advancement of Music & Education

First Generation College Bound, Inc.
Hillside Family of Agencies
It takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc.
Joes Movement
KIPP Baltimore
Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, Inc.
MERIT Health Leadership Academy
YMCA of Central Maryland



our support for success. Honoring this request would be most appreciated as Maryland Alliance supports HB688 with an opportunity for regulation input.

Thank you and I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the behalf of the Maryland Alliance for College Affordability and Equity.

Joseph Fisher

Chair

Maryland Alliance for College Affordability and Equity

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