

HB1530_Favorable_Kassie_Cardona

Written Testimony in Support of HB1530

Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility

To: Chair Ben Barnes, Vice Chair Anne R. Kaiser, and Members of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee

From: Kassie Cardona: Anne Arundel County Resident and Pupil Personnel Worker with Montgomery County Public Schools

I have been serving the extraordinary immigrant students and families of Maryland since 2002. It has been deeply fulfilling to support young people as they come to the United States, further their education, go to college, and make their dreams and wishes, and those of their families, come true as members of our collective community.

One of my professional areas of focus is the support of unaccompanied homeless youth and other McKinney-Vento students. Gathering the proper documentation for college, scholarship, and loan applications is a huge burden on these students and many of them are not with a family member caregiver but rather totally alone or with Office of Refugee Resettlement 'sponsors' who are not at all involved in these processes.

As you know, undocumented students must first apply as out-of-state residents to Maryland universities. Then, if accepted, they remain classified as out-of-state students. Additional burdens await them as they attempt to change from out of state to in state status through more paperwork and related bureaucratic hurdles.

Even if you pass this bill, it doesn't change the lack of eligibility that undocumented students face with internships, work study, or doing any kind of work to help pay for college. With a better facilitated pathway to college, they may at least be better prepared for the world of employment wherever and whenever it is possible for them to work.

The heart of this bill is that it simply affords to our undocumented students the same rights as those who are documented. Please pass this bill and thank you for serving our community.

Sincerely,

Kassie Cardona

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