



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
House Bill 1530: Higher Education – Undocumented Students – Out-of-State Tuition Exemption
Eligibility**

**House Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendments**

March 11, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The Blueprint envisions a public education system where all students can access opportunity and build a strong foundation for their future. Ensuring that students who graduate from Maryland schools can pursue higher education is an essential part of that vision. For this reason, Strong Schools Maryland offers favorable testimony with amendments in support of HB1530 – Higher Education – Undocumented Students – Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility.

HB1530 removes the requirement that a student or their parent or guardian show documentation of their Maryland tax returns in order for a student to qualify for the state’s out-of-state tuition exemption. The bill continues to rely on graduation from a Maryland high school or completion of a Maryland GED program as proof of residency. This change removes a significant administrative barrier that has prevented some otherwise eligible Maryland students from accessing affordable higher education.

Many students who qualify for the Maryland Dream Act have attended Maryland schools for years and have built strong ties to their communities. However, the current tax documentation requirement can create barriers for students with complex family circumstances, including unaccompanied youth or families who are unable to file tax returns. Removing this requirement helps ensure that students who have completed their K-12 education in Maryland have a fair opportunity to continue their education at Maryland colleges and universities.

We also support CASA amendments that would allow students to demonstrate financial standing through alternative documentation when applying for financial aid through the MHEC One-App. Acceptable documentation could include income self-attestation, employer verification letters, pay stubs, or bank statements. Without this change, some students may still face barriers to accessing financial aid even if they qualify for in-state tuition.

Ensuring equitable access to higher education benefits not only individual students but also the state as a whole. Maryland’s workforce depends on a diverse and well-educated population, and

many industries across the state are facing workforce shortages. Expanding access to higher education helps ensure that talented students educated in Maryland's public schools can continue contributing to our communities and economy.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges the House Appropriations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1530 with the proposed amendments.

Please contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.