

Written Testimony in Support of HB1530

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

From: Kevin Miller, Baltimore resident and Former Baltimore City Schools Teacher

As a former teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools, I spent years working with students who had the talent, work ethic, and ambition to succeed in college. Today, through my work building stronger college-to-career pathways funded through the Governor's Office for Children's ENOUGH Initiative, I continue see how critical access to higher education is for young people trying to build stable futures. In both cases, I have seen dedicated students held back from their full potential by forces outside of their control and outside of the classroom. It is my strong belief that removing the barriers that students experience outside of school, such as their parents' financial situation, should be the primary work of those looking to improve educational outcomes in this state.

When I was teaching, I watched hardworking, capable students run into barriers that had nothing to do with their ability to succeed. Several of my students who had spent their entire school careers in Maryland discovered late in their senior year that complicated documentation requirements would make it extremely difficult for them to attend college at all. I know many students today who are still facing the same barriers unless Maryland updates the law. In my current work supporting families in West Baltimore through the ENOUGH initiative, I have seen how truly transformative dedicated state funds can be in removing barriers to success for underprivileged children. However, there is one major barrier that the state has put in the way of so many students, making a path to college nearly impossible. HB1530 would remove this barrier and make college accessible to all instead of punishing select students for the tax status of their parents.

In my work helping strengthen pathways from school to stable careers, I see how important it is for students to be able to continue their education after high school. When capable students are blocked from college because of unnecessary administrative hurdles, it harms not only those young people but also the communities and workforce Maryland is trying to build.

I urge the committee to act with urgency. Each year that passes without change means another class of talented Maryland students facing barriers that keep them from reaching their potential.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Miller