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Written Testimony in Support of HB1530

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

From: Fiona Chamness, Baltimore City Resident

I am an immigration paralegal, community organizer, and artist, and someone whose life has been enriched beyond measure by the presence of immigrants. I am submitting written testimony to support HB1530, which would remove the requirements that undocumented students must submit three years of their parents' tax returns to qualify for in-state tuition and federal loans.

Immigrants to the U.S., both documented and undocumented, already face logistical hurdles many non-immigrants would find exhausting, and live in fear of outsize consequences for tiny mistakes. For undocumented immigrants, the stakes are particularly high. Undocumented students often take on a great deal of responsibility for their families due to factors like English proficiency. It is unfair to impose yet another burden on these students in the form of paperwork requirements that other prospective in-state attendees do not face.

Once again, I am asking you all to please consider passing HB1530 so that we can give undocumented students a fair chance at higher education. Because of my work in immigration, I am deeply aware that immigrants in our communities are already navigating a labyrinth just to manage their daily lives. Removing this unnecessary requirement is a step in the right direction for both immigrant rights and educational equity.

Respectfully,

Fiona Chamness