



BILL: HB 1530 - Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

DATE: March 11, 2026

POSITION: FAVORABLE

The University System of Maryland Student Council (USMSC) is one of four councils established during the restructuring of higher education in Maryland in 1988. USMSC represents the over 178,000 students in the University System of Maryland's 12 institutions and 3 regional higher education centers.

USMSC **supports** House Bill 1530, which repeals the requirement that a student or their parent or guardian must file taxes in order to qualify for the out-of-state tuition exemption at Maryland's public institutions of higher education.

At its core, this bill is about access. The current requirement to file a tax form presents an unnecessary burden to students who have grown up in Maryland, attended our K-12 schools, and consider this state their home, yet are preventing from accessing in-state tuition rates because of their family's tax filing status. Many students affected by this requirement are from mixed-status families, low-income families, or have complicated financial situations in which filing a tax form may not be possible, safe, or easy. These barriers should not prevent otherwise qualified Maryland high school graduates from pursuing a college degree at our top-notch state universities.

Requiring tax documentation does not measure a student's connection to Maryland. Instead, it penalizes students for circumstances outside of their control. Students who meet the existing criteria attending and graduating from a Maryland high school and enrolling within the required timeframe have demonstrated their connection and commitment to this State. They are Maryland students in every meaningful sense.

From a student perspective, affordability is already one of the most significant barriers for access to higher education. For some students, the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition is the difference between enrolling and not enrolling at all. By removing this requirement, the state would not be expanding a benefit indiscriminately; it would be removing a structural impediment that disproportionately harms Maryland's most vulnerable students.

Additionally, it would strengthen our workforce pipeline. Students that have been educated in our state are more likely to stay, work, and contribute to our economy. When we make college accessible, we invest in our state's long-term prosperity.

The state of Maryland has long been considered a leader in higher education access and opportunity. Passing this bill continues that legacy.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1530.