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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: Zoe Reck

Hello, my name is Zoe, and I am a Teacher in Baltimore City. I am originally from Houston, Texas, and have grown up with immigrants at the heart of my community. Now it is an issue that is near and dear to the students and families I work with every day. 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.

Education is fundamental to justice. Multilingual learners, who are often immigrants or the children of immigrants, continue to be one of the fastest-growing populations in Maryland schools. To limit the access of such a large portion of Maryland's youth to higher education is not only to allow, but to support, institutional injustice against immigrants in the state; it confirms that they are less deserving than their peers of access to certain fields and careers.

In a time when so many factors are stacked against the success of immigrants, we must do everything we can to not only mitigate physical and emotional harm, but to provide a vision and pathway to a more just future for those who, for too long in Maryland, have had little support from those in power. If you were to come into my classroom and ask what my students want to be when they grow up, they would respond with answers like teachers, doctors, nurses, police officers, and firefighters. I urge you to support them in these endeavors by ensuring they all have access to these careers and by removing unnecessary and burdensome tax documentation restrictions for the students in our classrooms who happen to be immigrants

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. You can confirm for Maryland's youth that if you work hard in school, truly anything is possible.

Respectfully,
Zoe Reck