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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: Adriana Rosas, Baltimore City Schools College & Career Advisor

College is hard enough. Being an immigrant is hard enough. Being a first generation college going student is hard enough. My name is Adriana Rosas and I have served Baltimore City Public School students for the past 8 years as a College and Career Advisor. In every year of my work, I encounter undocumented students who cannot qualify for in-state tuition because either they or their parents have not filed three years of Maryland state taxes.

I am on the frontlines asking the uncomfortable questions of one: "Are you a citizen?", two: "Who takes care of you financially?", and three: "Have you, your parent/guardian filed Maryland state taxes for the past 3-years?" I take a sigh of relief if the student responds yes to questions one or three. If the child says no, I have to break the news to them that unfortunately they do not qualify for in-state tuition despite wanting to pursue a degree or trade school certification. I've had kids break down crying in my office. Sometimes the only consolation I can give is that they work tirelessly to apply for national and small local scholarships that MIGHT help cover the cost of college.

No child should have the dream to pursue higher education and be denied the ability to go to a college that will fit them academically, socially, and financially. Research consistently shows the positive impact higher education has not only on individuals and families, but also on our communities and society as a whole.

I would like to leave you with the story of a recent high school senior. He has extraordinary musical talent and dreams of majoring in music. He works a job to support himself and lives with his brother, who is his guardian. However, together they have only filed two years of Maryland state taxes. If HB1530 were passed, he would be able to afford in-state tuition and pursue his dream, perhaps even becoming a famous musician from Maryland.

You have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference by helping make the American Dream more attainable for students like him.

Sincerely,

Adriana Rosas