

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR SB 420

**Bill:** SB 420 – Public Institutions of Higher Education – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Plan and Reporting

**Committee:** House Appropriations

**Position:** Favorable with Amendments

**To Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:**

I am writing to urge a favorable report on SB 420 with a specific amendment to ensure the long-term visibility and success of parenting students in Maryland's higher education system.

SB 420 represents a critical evolution of the *Pregnant and Parenting Student Support Act*. By expanding these requirements to include our community colleges and shifting to a data-driven regulatory process under MHEC, this bill acknowledges that we cannot support a student population we do not accurately count.

I strongly support the current amendments that:

- **Streamline Data Collection:** Moving the definition of "parenting student" to a regulatory process allows MHEC to work directly with institutions to develop flexible, effective, and standardized data collection timeframes.
- **Focus on Essential Services:** By removing outdated language regarding adoption referrals, the bill centers its focus on the immediate, high-impact needs of students—such as childcare, lactation spaces, and government assistance navigation (WIC, SNAP).

**Requested Amendment:** However, I respectfully ask the Committee to reject the striking of the language "each September 1 thereafter" on page 3, lines 3-4. The current version of the bill risks making the reporting of this vital demographic data a one-time event. For Maryland to truly understand the "politics of care" and the barriers to completion for student parents, this reporting must be annual. Consistent data is the only way to measure the impact of our policies and ensure that student parents—who often face the highest risks of stopping out—remain a priority in our state's equity goals.

By restoring the annual reporting requirement, this committee ensures that the "visibility" created by SB 420 is not temporary, but a permanent fixture of our commitment to student success.

I urge a favorable report on SB 420 with the inclusion of the annual reporting requirement.

Respectfully submitted,

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Note: I am submitting support for SB 420 as an independent scholar and voter. My testimony does to represent the official position of Frederick Community College