

**Yoslin Amaya Hernandez**

13315 Ardennes Ave  
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**Delegate Ben Barnes**

Chair, Appropriations Committee  
Maryland State Legislature  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Subject: Testimony in Support of House Bill 006 – Public Institutions of Higher Education - Pregnant and Parenting Students - Plan and Reporting**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Yoslin Amaya Hernandez, and I am a graduate student parent, a Montgomery County resident, and a policy and advocacy professional working closely with student parents across Maryland. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 006.

HB 006 builds on the Pregnant and Parenting Student Support Act by strengthening implementation and accountability across Maryland's public higher education system. While existing law requires institutions to develop plans to support pregnant and parenting students, HB 006 takes the critical next step by expanding those requirements to all public institutions and by requiring consistent data collection on students' parental status. Simply put, we cannot effectively support student parents if we do not know who they are.

Nationally, one in five undergraduate students and one in three graduate students are parenting while enrolled in college. In Maryland, student parents represent a significant but often invisible population. Without reliable, uniform data, institutions are limited in their ability to connect students to existing supports, evaluate whether those supports are working, or plan effectively for services such as child care, housing stability, academic flexibility, and health care access.

As both a student parent and someone who has worked closely with colleges, advocates, and policymakers, I have seen how the absence of data creates gaps in support. When student parents are not identified, they are often excluded from planning conversations, overlooked in resource allocation, and left to navigate higher education systems on their own. This invisibility disproportionately affects students of color and students with low incomes, making data collection an issue of equity as well as efficiency.

HB 006 provides Maryland with the tools needed to better understand and serve an estimated 70,000 student parents across the state. By requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to collect consistent demographic data, this bill will allow institutions and

policymakers to move from assumptions to informed action and ensure that existing legal requirements translate into meaningful, on-the-ground support.

I respectfully urge the Appropriations Committee to support House Bill 006 and continue Maryland's leadership in advancing equity and student success in higher education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Yoslin Amaya Hernandez