

Kelsey Ko
209 W Madison St, Apt 1
Baltimore, MD 21201
484-767-6780
Kelsey Ko

Written Testimony in Support of HB1530

To: Chair Ben Barnes, Vice Chair Anne R. Kaiser and Members of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee

From: Kelsey Ko, Baltimore City Resident & Therapist

Hello, my name is Kelsey Ko and I am a child/teen therapist and former Baltimore City Public Schools teacher. 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.

As an immigrant myself and also as a therapist and former teacher that has worked closely with immigrants and children of immigrants, I am acutely familiar with the importance of educational attainment in opening doors and opportunities for young people. While higher education often is the minimal requirement for employment in many fields, there are still many obstacles that young people face in accessing – whether it is language barriers related to documents like FAFSA, barriers to understanding or demystifying the college application process, or even this current barrier around submitting parents' tax returns in order to fund their education, which HB1530 would effectively rectify.

Many undocumented students have spent their whole lives in our country and call it home, yet don't have equal access to opportunities simply for the fact of their citizenship status. Passing HB1530 would eliminate one more obstacle for these students who dream of furthering their education. Change can't wait. Please pass this bill so that our college-bound students feel that their futures are one step closer and easier to access.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Ko