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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: Lilith Liang, Baltimore City Resident

Hello, my name is Lilith Liang and I am a PhD Worker at the School of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore City. I fully support the passage of HB1530. Immigrant students and scholars are essential to the vibrant academic community I belong to. In addition, I myself am a child of immigrants. Coming from a family of immigrants who have gone against many odds to get an education and put me through college, I am passionately in support of 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.

Access to education is critical for a functioning democratic society, a fundamental American belief. It would be a tragedy to deny anyone the ability to pursue additional education regardless of their immigration status or national origin. As a mentor and educator to many undergraduate students, it breaks my heart to think about how many talented and competent students are structurally excluded from accessing the opportunities they deserve. As one of our Founding Fathers Benjamin Franklin once said: "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." It would not only be a moral outrage to deny an education to bright and intelligent students, but would in fact violate a key American ideal and only hurt our society further.

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. Education is the backbone of a well-run democracy, which we need now more than ever.

Respectfully,

Lilith Liang