Maryland
MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

April 8, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and the Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) respectfully requests a favorable report of Senate Bill 212, the Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act, sponsored by Senator Corderman. This legislation would exempt financially dependent children of certain State or local public safety employees who die as a result of or in the course of employment from paying out-of-state or out-of-county tuition at Maryland public institutions of higher education.

Senate Bill 212 honors the courage and sacrifice of public safety personnel, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, corrections officers, emergency medical services personnel, and others, by ensuring that the dependents of those who make the ultimate sacrifice have expanded access to affordable higher education. Access to higher education can be life-altering for a student and provides long-term economic mobility. This bill aligns with Maryland's longstanding commitment to supporting families of public servants and acknowledges the profound service these individuals provide to our communities.

By exempting dependent children from out-of-state or out-of-county tuition, SB 212 would reduce financial barriers and extend meaningful tuition equity for these students. This exemption complements existing State tuition benefit programs and reflects Maryland's values of fairness and recognition of service.

MHEC supports the intent of Senate Bill 212 and is committed to working collaboratively with public institutions of higher education. MHEC wants to highlight that this legislation would require institutions to support the effective and timely implementation of the tuition benefit. To support smooth administration, MHEC notes that institutions, in collaboration with MHEC, would need to:

- Update residency and tuition classification processes so eligible students are clearly identified, and the exemption is applied consistently and accurately; and

- Align systems and operational workflows to reflect the new eligibility category, ensuring proper coding, reporting, and transparency.

MHEC views these steps as part of its ongoing coordination with institutions to improve clarity, consistency, and student experience. These considerations are offered to support smooth administration of the benefit and to ensure that eligible students receive the full intended value of the exemption in a timely manner.

Senate Bill 212 represents a meaningful step toward expanding educational access while honoring the legacy of Maryland's public safety professionals, and it is not anticipated to have a fiscal impact.

For these reasons, the Maryland Higher Education Commission respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 212. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Meghan Music, Executive Director of External and Legislative Relations.

Yours in Service,

Elena Quiroz-Livanis

Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Interim Secretary
Maryland Higher Education Commission