
House Appropriations Committee

March 3, 2026

HB 818 – Higher Education - Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Tuition Exemption and Associated Benefits**Position: Favorable with Amendments**

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports the intent of **HB 818** and appreciates the sponsor's commitment to expanding supports for foster care recipients and homeless youth pursuing postsecondary education. Maryland's community colleges share this commitment and currently already provide a tuition exemption for eligible foster care recipients and homeless youth while connecting students with advising, emergency assistance, transportation support, food access programs, and other wraparound services that promote persistence and completion.

Community colleges are uniquely positioned within Maryland's higher education landscape. As primarily commuter institutions, our campuses do not offer on-campus housing or meal plans. Students live at home, independently in the community, or with family members while attending college. As community colleges do not have residence halls or housing infrastructure, the requirement in HB 818 to provide free room and board or the estimated cost of off-campus housing and meals would create a substantial and ongoing financial obligation that does not align with the operational structure of our institutions. Maryland's community colleges remain committed to supporting foster care recipients and homeless youth in meaningful and mission-aligned ways.

However, given our commuter model and the fiscal constraints facing the community college sector, MACC respectfully requests an amendment to remove community colleges from the bill's provisions. This approach would allow residential institutions to implement the expanded housing benefits contemplated in the legislation while enabling community colleges to continue serving these students effectively through tuition exemption and targeted support services within our existing framework. MACC looks forward to continuing to work with the sponsor and the Committee to ensure foster care recipients and homeless youth have access to affordable higher education opportunities across Maryland. For these reasons, MACC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report **WITH AMENDMENTS** on **HB 818**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.