

April 7, 2026

Hon. Benjamin Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Re: Support for Senate Bill 420

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Greater Washington Partnership (the Partnership), I am writing to express our strong support for SB 420, which would allow for the collection of data on the parental status of college students in Maryland, an essential first step to improving completion rates for students who are balancing caregiving responsibilities while pursuing higher education.

The Partnership is a nonprofit alliance of nearly 50 leading corporate, university, and nonprofit employers in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia committed to championing the region's growth and vitality. Our member organizations provide 647,000 direct and supported jobs through their economic activity across the region, and together we leverage our collective resources to identify shared challenges and offer solutions to the region's critical workforce, transportation, and economic development challenges. The Partnership's Skills and Talent Initiative works with the region's educators and employers to strengthen talent pipelines and ensure learners have access to training and jobs that lead to economic mobility. SB 420 is aligned with our goal of fostering a diverse and skilled talent pipeline needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Nationwide, an estimated one in five undergraduate students and one in three graduate students are parenting while enrolled in school. Student parents are more likely to live at or below the poverty line than their non-parenting peers, and first-generation students and veterans are also frequently student parents. Although student parents maintain GPAs comparable to those of non-parenting students, over half depart higher education within six years without completing a bachelor's degree, compared to just 32 percent of students without children¹. Addressing the special needs of these students improves retention and graduation rates as well as lifetime earnings outcomes, particularly for Pell-eligible students and other nontraditional students². Strengthening data collection is a critical first step in meeting both student needs and workforce needs³.

This legislation would place Maryland at the forefront of procuring comprehensive data to capture the number of parenting students in Maryland, address their experiences, and dismantle obstacles impeding their academic and professional success. This will empower policymakers at every level to make informed decisions and provide targeted support for this often-overlooked population.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 420. Thank you for your consideration and shared commitment to reducing barriers to economic mobility and opportunity, as well as making this region the best place to live, work, and build a business.

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¹ Generation Hope: [National Student-Parent Survey Results & Recommendations](#), 2020.

² American Council on Education: [Student- Parent Data: What We Know, What We Don't, and How to Find Out](#), 2024.

³ Bipartisan Policy Center: [Unlocking Parent Students' Potential through Intentional Postsecondary Supports](#), 2025.