

February 6, 2026

Greetings Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am Dr. Tisa Silver Canady, Founder and Executive Director of the Maryland Center for Collegiate Financial Wellness.

The heart of our mission is to help Marylanders make informed decisions about higher education and how to pay for it.

From extensive work with current and former students, I can wholeheartedly say: students and families need a better understanding of the costs and benefits of higher education. Having a better understanding can give them a better chance to make more informed decisions and achieve a better return on their investment.

Determining “ROI” begins with estimates, and there are plenty of on- and off-campus sources of information to help with the calculation.

At MCCFW, we refer Marylanders directly to each institution’s websites for details on admissions and financial aid processes, costs, and sources of funding. We also direct them to federal and state government resources such as the College Scorecard, College Navigator, and MHEC. The presentation of information varies by institution and by agency, and sometimes the presentation varies across units within the same institution or agency. This often creates a frustrating experience especially for first-generation students and others who are navigating the higher education selection process without support.

HB538 requires institutions to share existing information in a deliberate, coordinated fashion throughout the campus ecosystem. The bill refers to the Cost of Attendance, graduation rates, salary outcomes, and debt outcomes, all of which financial aid professionals know well due to federal reporting requirements. Having a state level requirement will ensure that this information remains available with the added benefit of prominent positioning for students to reach with relative ease.

In closing, HB538 provides schools with:

1. Ample time to enhance existing communications and
2. The opportunity to encourage informed decision making and financial preparedness for one of the most significant financial decisions of a lifetime.

Thank you for your consideration. I ask that you issue a favorable report on HB538.

Respectfully submitted,

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