

HB0003_MACC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

House Appropriations Committee

February 3, 2026

HB 3 - Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 3**. This bill provides an important form of educational support to the financially dependent children of State and local public safety employees who lose their lives in the line of duty by ensuring that residency status does not become a barrier to attending a public institution of higher education in Maryland.

Maryland's community colleges serve students from families that have made profound sacrifices in service to their communities and the State. For these students, access to affordable higher education can be critical to their ability to persist in school and achieve long-term educational and economic stability after the loss of a parent. HB 3 recognizes that these families should not face additional challenges solely because of where they live when they seek to enroll.

By establishing a clear and consistent policy for this small, specific group of students, HB 3 reflects Maryland's commitment to honoring public safety service and supporting surviving family members in meaningful ways. This approach ensures that students who have already experienced an extraordinary loss can pursue higher education on equal footing with their peers.

Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB 3**.

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

HB 0003 FAV FCG OCE LS26 FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Fitzwater

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

HB 3 – Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

DATE: February 3, 2026
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **HB 3 – Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)** a favorable report. This bill grants in-state or in-county tuition at public institutions to children of State and local public safety employees who die in the line of duty, regardless of current residency.

Our public safety employees risk their lives daily to keep Maryland residents safe and protect others. When a first responder dies in the line of duty, we must ensure that their family has access to as many resources as possible to honor their sacrifice. This is not just our duty as elected officials, but as good neighbors, community members, and humans.

Currently, if the child of a first responder who has died in the line of duty lives outside Maryland, they are not eligible for in-state tuition at Maryland institutions of higher education. This creates hardship for families who have already endured the devastating loss of a loved one serving Maryland and its communities. Because of Frederick County's location near the borders of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, it is not unusual for our first responders to live in neighboring states. HB 3 ensures that children of first responders who die in the line of duty while serving communities in Maryland are eligible for in-state tuition, regardless of residency.

We must do all we can to support our first responders and their families, especially in the heartbreaking and life altering experience of a line of duty death – HB 3 is one small step that will make a significant impact for families whose loved ones gave their lives to protect and serve others.

I respectfully request that the State join us in our gratitude and advance HB 3 with a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD

HB003_Support_IAFF Local 3666 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Nash

Position: FAV



Career Fire Fighters Association of Frederick County, MD Inc.
International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3666
Affiliated with:
Maryland State Professional Fire Fighters Association and The Central Maryland Labor Council / AFL-CIO



COMMENTS IN SUPPORT

HB 003: Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

Sponsored by: Delegate Schindler

Appropriations Committee

Hearing 2/03 at 1:00 p.m.

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the President of the Career Firefighters Association of Frederick County, Maryland (IAFF Local 3666) – Frederick County’s public employee organization that represents the over 600 men and women employed with the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue. We are in support of HB 003 and I, as well as other organizations like mine, have submitted written testimony as well.

This legislation would offer a new death benefit for Maryland’s public safety professionals who perish in the line of duty.

Losing Battalion Chief Josh Laird in the line of duty was a devastating blow to our department, our community, and most importantly, his family. We have proudly supported Sara and the girls every step of the way and we view this as our next way we can look after them.

Josh gave his life protecting the people of Frederick County, embodying the bravery and selflessness that defines the fire service. His sacrifice should not be forgotten, and his family should not have to struggle for the support they deserve.

Josh’s children lost their father that day. While they may not reside in Maryland, their loss is no less significant, and their future should not be any less secure. The State of Maryland has long recognized the importance of honoring fallen first responders by providing in-state tuition benefits to their dependents. This should not be limited by geography—Josh laid down his life for this state, and Maryland should stand by his family in return.

Providing in-state tuition benefits to Josh’s children is not just an act of gratitude; it is a commitment to those who put their lives on the line for Marylanders every day. We urge our leaders to ensure that the families of our fallen heroes, regardless of where they live, are given every opportunity to succeed. Josh Laird gave everything for Maryland—it’s time for Maryland to give back to his family.

House Bill 3 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Matthew Schindler

Position: FAV

MATTHEW J. SCHINDLER
Legislative District 2B
Washington County

Appropriations Committee
Subcommittees

Oversight Committee on Personnel

Public Safety and Administration



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3125
800-492-7122 Ext. 3125
Matthew.Schindler@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. For the record, my name is Delegate Matthew J. Schindler, and I am here to present House Bill 3. HB 3 is cross-filed in the Senate as SB 212 by Senator Corderman.

House Bill 3 would grant in-state or in-county tuition at a Maryland public institution of higher education to the dependents of state or local public safety employees who die in line of duty regardless of a dependent's residency.

Maryland has a long and proud track record of standing by the families of those who make the ultimate sacrifice in service to our communities. This bill builds on that commitment by ensuring that dependents are not denied educational opportunity because of circumstances created by tragedy.

After a line-of-duty death, families are often forced to make difficult decisions—whether to move closer to extended family, seek employment elsewhere, or simply find the support they need to heal. House Bill 3 ensures that when those decisions result in a move out of state, the dependent does not lose the benefit Maryland intended to provide. The sacrifice was made here, in service to Marylanders, and our obligation should not disappear because a family's address changes.

Over the past twelve years, thirty-two Maryland public safety employees have died in the line of duty. Each represents a family forever changed and a responsibility for our state to honor that sacrifice in a meaningful way.

House Bill 3 does exactly that. It affirms that Maryland looks after the families of its fallen heroes—not just immediately after tragedy, but in the years that follow, and regardless of where life may take them.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 3.

Letter of Support for HB0003.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



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410-841-3565
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Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Joint Committees
Administrative, Executive,
and Legislative Review
Children, Youth, and Families
Program Open Space and Agricultural
Land Preservation

Williamsport Office
2N Conococheque Street
Williamsport Town Hall
Williamsport, Maryland

January 20, 2026

RE: Fire/EMS Coalition Support for HB0003

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee,

The Fire/EMS Coalition would like to express their support for House Bill 0003: **Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)**. This bill will exempt financially dependent children of State or local public safety employees who die as a result of or in the course of performance of duties from paying out-of-state or out-of-county tuition at a public institution of higher education in the State.

The Fire/EMS Coalition supports House Bill 0003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike McKay".

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

Voting Organizations:

Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA)
Maryland State Firefighter's Association (MSFA)
State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI)
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMMS)
Metro Fire Chief's Association
Professional Firefighters of Maryland

Our Mission Statement

The Maryland Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation; rather Coalition members are asked to offer support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.

HB3 written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

-a 501(c)(3) organization

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel



Legislative Committee

17 State circle

Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair: Chief Robert Phillips

Office: 410-974-2222

Cell: 443-205-5030

Email: rfcchief48@gmail.com

HB 3: Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)

My name is Chief Robert Phillips, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA)

I wish to present testimony in favor of **House Bill 3: Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees (Maryland Fallen Heroes Tuition Benefits Act)**

The MSFA is in full support of this bill. When “public Safety Employee” leaves their home to go to work it is not known if or when they will return. If they for what ever reason do not return then their family has to move on and make the best do. This bill does not replace them to the family but it does in fact show that the state recognizes the sacrifice that has taken place and allows the children to move forward with their education at the lowest cost and not charge them extra for not living in a certain district or state.

The MSFA asks that you return a FAVORABLE vote on **HB 3**.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully

HB 003 MCPA MSA-in-state-county-tuition-public saf

Uploaded by: Samira Jackson

Position: FAV



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair and
Members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira A. Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: January 29, 2026

RE: **HB 003: Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition - Exemption for Dependents of State or Local Public Safety Employees**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT** HB 003. This bill clarifies that a financially dependent child who may reside in another state or another county whose parent is a state or local public safety official who dies in the line of duty is exempt from paying the out-of-state or out-of-county tuition rate at a public institution of higher education in Maryland.

Public safety professionals dedicate their lives to protecting and serving the people of Maryland. Tragically, some of these brave individuals do not return home. Their families, already burdened with immeasurable loss, should not also face financial barriers to higher education.

HB 003 aligns with and builds upon similar legislation enacted across the country, including in Maryland where the dependents are residents. Children of law enforcement who do not live in the state of Maryland should be no exception. The legislation recognizes the sacrifices made and extends these benefits so that children of fallen heroes can pursue their academic and professional aspirations without undue financial burden.

For these reasons, the MCPA and MSA respectfully request a **favorable report** on HB 003.