

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 10, 2026

SB 273 - Higher Education - Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program - Eligibility

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **SB 273**. This bill expands eligibility for the Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program to include Maryland residents who are or were eligible for the federal Chapter 35 Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance benefit and clarifies acceptable methods for verifying eligibility.

Maryland's community colleges serve a significant number of military-connected students and dependents who rely on a combination of federal and State resources to pursue higher education. SB 273 appropriately aligns State eligibility standards with an existing federal determination, helping to ensure that students who have already been recognized at the federal level as eligible survivors or dependents are not excluded from State support due to documentation or verification barriers.

The bill also improves administrative efficiency by allowing applicants to submit a Chapter 35 certificate of eligibility or, when necessary, permitting a school certifying official or institutional liaison to verify eligibility. These changes provide clarity for institutions, reduce delays for students, and support consistent implementation of the program across postsecondary institutions, including community colleges.

For community colleges, SB 273 promotes equitable access to higher education, strengthens coordination between State and federal veteran education benefits, and ensures that eligible students can access support in a timely and reliable manner. MACC believes these changes represent a thoughtful and reasonable expansion of an important scholarship program serving students whose families have made significant sacrifices in service to the nation. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB 273**.

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