

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 28, 2026

SB 207 - Higher Education - Guaranteed Access Grant Program - Applicability

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **SB 207**. This bill delays the planned decentralization of the Guaranteed Access Grant Program until the 2029–2030 financial aid award year, allowing the State to maintain the current statewide administration of the program during a period of significant transition in financial aid policy and systems.

Maryland's community colleges primarily serve students who receive Educational Assistance Grants rather than Guaranteed Access Grants; however, MACC strongly supports policies that promote stability and accuracy across the State's financial aid programs. Maintaining a centralized process for the Guaranteed Access Grant Program ensures consistent eligibility determinations, reduces the risk of administrative errors, and helps prevent delays in award notifications for low-income students who depend on timely financial aid decisions.

In addition, by delaying decentralization, SB 207 provides the State with an important opportunity to evaluate how financial aid resources are allocated across need-based programs, including the balance between Guaranteed Access Grants and Educational Assistance Grants. This additional time could support thoughtful consideration of more equitable and effective approaches to distributing aid so that students at both two-year and four-year institutions are adequately served.

By preserving the existing structure of the Guaranteed Access Grant Program as federal and State financial aid systems continue to evolve, SB 207 provides needed operational certainty for institutions and protects students from unintended disruptions in aid delivery. MACC appreciates the Maryland Higher Education Commission's efforts to prioritize program stability and long-term effectiveness. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 207**.

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