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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 430
Institutions of Higher Education – Mandatory Disclosures for New and
Prospective Students (Informed Enrollment Act)

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
March 11, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of this committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 430, the Informed Enrollment Act.

Access to higher education is a cornerstone of economic mobility and workforce development, but far too many students make critical postsecondary decisions without sufficient information about college options, costs, and outcomes. Although Maryland has long prioritized broadening college access, this alone does not guarantee success. Unfortunately, many families remain unaware of the U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard, an invaluable resource that clearly presents essential data such as the total cost of attendance, average student debt, graduation and retention rates, median salary outcomes, and campus demographics. Instead, some students and their families rely on rankings from sources like U.S. News & World Report, which have been criticized for their reliance on subjective data and potential for manipulation. A lack of awareness of objective, publicly available data may lead students to choose institutions that do not align with their academic, financial, or career goals.

SB 430 addresses this issue by requiring Maryland four-year institutions of higher education to prominently display and disseminate information from the College Scorecard. Under this legislation, prospective students and families would find links to the Scorecard on institutional websites and social media accounts, while also hearing about it during recruitment events, orientation, and routine advisement sessions. This ensures that students learn about program offerings, career outcomes, financial aid resources, support services, and campus diversity before making life-altering decisions.

Maryland has some of the highest student loan debt in the U.S., with the average borrower owing approximately **\$43,781 to \$45,173**. Roughly 847,400 Maryland residents hold a total of \$37.1 billion in student debt, with about 13.5% of state residents carrying this burden. Paying for college, often one of the largest expenses for American families, needs to be approached with full awareness of the potential financial burden. By guiding students toward data-driven decisions, we reduce the risk of debilitating debt and underemployment while helping them select institutions and programs that foster success.

This legislation also underscores the importance of institutional accountability. By requiring colleges and universities to proactively share transparent data, SB 430 provides students with the information they need to compare schools and decide which one best serves their goals. Over time, this level of transparency will strengthen Maryland's workforce, ensuring that taxpayer-funded financial aid supports a student population whose decisions align with meaningful employment opportunities and long-term economic well-being.

When families fully understand program requirements, performance data, support services, transfer policies, and any associated costs, they are better positioned to choose options where students can succeed. Conversely, when information is unclear or unevenly disclosed, students may face academic disruption, financial strain, or the need to transfer midstream; outcomes that disproportionately impact first-generation students and families without access to specialized guidance.

The bill also aligns with broader statewide efforts to improve educational equity and accountability. Maryland families deserve clarity when navigating educational options. SB 430 advances that goal in a balanced, thoughtful, and student-centered manner.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 430.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks