

Testimony in Support of SB 0420

TO: The Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

FROM: Dr. Anne Hofmann, Professor of English and Cultural Studies, Frederick Community College

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: SUPPORT for SB 0420 – Higher Education - Pregnant and Parenting Students - Data Collection and Concrete Supports

Formal Statement

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Dr. Anne Hofmann. I am a Professor of English and Cultural Studies at Frederick Community College, and I am here today as a member of the public and a former single mother who earned my PhD at College Park while raising two children. I navigated eight years of doctoral study in a system that offered no targeted support. I urge a **favorable report on SB 0420**.

Argument for Support

SB 0420 is a critical amendment to the Pregnant and Parenting Student Support Act (HB 0840) that passed last year and is now Maryland law. While the previous legislation established the foundation by requiring institutions to post plans, **SB 0420** ensures equity by requiring these concrete supports at all public institutions.

It formalizes the data collection necessary to make these families "visible." Without this data, we cannot evaluate effectiveness or outcomes. I want to clarify that referrals and plan requirements are already law; this bill simply ensures those services reach the students who already qualify. You cannot connect a student to a resource if you do not know they exist.

The Impact of Visibility

In higher education, we say: you cannot support student parents if you do not know who they are. Currently, 20% of U.S. college students are parenting, and nearly 70% of those at community colleges live at or below 200% of the poverty line.

Despite these challenges, my own research proves that when we know which institutions and programs house the most parenting students and provide programmatic interventions, these students achieve completion rates that actually exceed the general college-going population. This is good for children, families, and Maryland's economy.

Fiscal Responsibility

Research from IWPR shows that investing in Maryland's student parents yields a massive fiscal return. For every \$1 invested, the return to the state ranges from \$7 to over \$9. For example, a single mother in Maryland who earns a bachelor's degree contributes nearly \$245,000 more in lifetime taxes and saves the state over \$41,000 in public assistance costs. These are net gains to our state, not liabilities.

Conclusion

SB 0420 moves us from "plans on a website" to data-driven results that empower Maryland families to thrive. I testify today without hesitation that this bill is a vital step for equity, and I urge a **favorable report**.

NOTE: My testimony does not represent the opinion or viewpoint of Frederick Community College or their leadership, and my testimony is provided as a member of the public based on personal expertise or interest.