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Uploaded by: Kenzie Funk

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
House Bill 505: Public and Nonpublic Schools Student Transfers – Academic Records Documentation**

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable

April 1, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint envisions a public education system where all students can feel safe and supported to learn and thrive in their school community. It was designed to specifically address systemic inequities that disproportionately impact historically marginalized communities. As a result, **Strong Schools Maryland offers favorable testimony in support of HB 505 – Public and Nonpublic Schools – Student School Transfers – Academic Records Documentation** which aims to ensure that students are not denied timely enrollment or continuity of instruction as a result of the delay of official academic records.

Students transferring between schools, whether between public and non-public or between different local education agencies, experience disruptions in their education when transcripts or records are withheld. These delays can result in missed instructional time, improper course placement, barriers to participation in advanced course work, and unnecessary stress for students and families. Disputes can be due to events unrelated to academic performance and beyond the control of the student. Furthermore, this mistreatment can be compounded by systemic and interpersonal biases within school systems.

The proposed legislation would expand the current law to require schools to accept unofficial transcripts, report cards, certain test score reports, or unofficial AP or IB exam results for the purpose of allowing a student to continue their education. The proposed language also does not eliminate the need for official records, rather it ensures that students can enroll and attend classes while administrative matters are resolved. The policy expansion is aligned with the goal of the Blueprint as students experiencing transitions, particularly those from low income families, immigrant families, or historically marginalized communities, are disproportionately impacted by transitions. Ensuring that schools accept reasonable documentation safeguards students from academic setbacks and allows them to maintain progress towards their goals.

HB505 promotes the continuation of student learning and consistency across public and non-public schools by establishing a uniform standard for temporary documentation. A student's right to learn should not be contingent upon unresolved disputes between institutions.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 505.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.

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Uploaded by: Lonia Muckle

Position: FAV



HB 505 - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student School Transfers - Academic Records

Documentation

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

April 1, 2026

SUPPORT

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 505. This bill will require schools receiving a transferring student to accept a defined set of unofficial academic documents when an official transcript or record is withheld due to a dispute.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

When a student needs to transfer to a new school and their former school refuses to provide official records during a dispute, the student suffers the consequences and can experience severe educational disruption. The lack of required formal documentation about a child's performance, coursework, or placement can lead to inappropriate grade placement, lost credits, repeated coursework, and extended time in school.

By requiring receiving schools to accept unofficial records such as report cards, standardized test results, and other evidence of academic progress when official transcripts are denied, this bill removes a structural barrier that disproportionately affects students already at risk. Students from low-income families and those who move frequently, including children in foster care or experiencing housing instability, are especially vulnerable when records are inaccessible. HB 505 ensures these children can remain in appropriate classes and continue their education without unnecessary setbacks.

HB 505 is particularly important for students who lack access to resources that can offset academic disruption. When a child is placed in the wrong grade or loses credits, low-income families may not be able to pay for tutoring, private evaluations, or other support to compensate for this disruption. As a result, students who already face barriers to stability are the ones most likely to experience long term academic harm under the current system. HB 505 promotes fair access to educational opportunities across Maryland.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 505.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope

AIMS - House Bill 505 (CO)- Public and Nonpublic

Uploaded by: Rory Murray

Position: FWA



Association of Independent
Maryland & DC Schools

Hon. Brian Feldman
Chair
Senate, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Bill: House Bill 505 - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student School Transfers - Academic Records Documentation
Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

House Bill 505 appropriately seeks to ensure continuity of education when official records are withheld, but it would benefit from clarification of key terms and additional safeguards regarding the authenticity of unofficial documents in an era of rapidly advancing artificial intelligence tools. Support for intent

We support the bill's purpose of preventing a student's education from being disrupted solely because a sending school declines to release official records in the context of a dispute. Allowing a receiving school to enroll and place a transferring student based on unofficial documentation is a practical solution that prioritizes the student's educational continuity.

Need to clarify "dispute with a student"

We respectfully request clarification of what constitutes a "dispute between the sending school and the student" for purposes of triggering the obligation in subsection (B). It is unclear whether this phrase is intended to cover only tuition or contractual disputes, disciplinary matters, academic integrity issues, or any disagreement that leads the sending school to withhold records. Without a clearer definition or illustrative parameters, schools may interpret this language inconsistently, leading to uneven application of the statute and potential unintended incentives around how and when records are released. We also need clarity as to whether or not this includes a dispute with a student's family or guardian, and who can bring a claim. To address this, the bill could either define "dispute" in § 7-118(a) or cross-reference any existing statutory or regulatory framework governing record holds, so that schools, families, and counsel understand precisely when this section applies.

Verification and AI-generated documents

We also urge caution regarding the broad catch-all language in § 7-118(b)(6), which allows "any other unofficial record or copy of a document" to be used to evidence a student's academic history. The rapid progress and accessibility of artificial intelligence tools has significantly increased the risk that documents such as transcripts, award letters, and score reports can be fabricated or altered in ways that are difficult to detect without verification. To mitigate this risk while preserving flexibility, we suggest:

- Clarifying that acceptance of unofficial documents under § 7-118(b) does not limit a receiving school's ability to verify authenticity with the issuing institution or testing agency when practicable.



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- Encouraging the State Board or the Maryland State Department of Education to develop guidance or minimum best practices for reviewing and validating unofficial records, especially where they are delivered solely by the student or family and lack direct confirmation from the sending school.
- Considering language that prioritizes documents that can be traced back to an originating institution or secure electronic platform (for example, score reports or grade records transmitted via recognized portals), before relying solely on student-supplied copies that could be AI-generated or otherwise manipulated.

These modest clarifications would help ensure that HB 505 achieves its goal of protecting students caught in disputes with their former schools, while recognizing the new verification challenges posed by sophisticated AI tools and preserving the integrity of academic records.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Peter Baily
Executive Director
AIMS MD&DC

crossover MDCAPE - HB 505 - Opposed.pdf

Uploaded by: Ariel Sadwin

Position: UNF



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 505

**PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS - STUDENT SCHOOL TRANSFERS - ACADEMIC
RECORDS DOCUMENTATION**

APRIL 1, 2026

OPPOSE

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of over 138,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

House Bill 505 would require a school to accept a variety of documents in lieu of a formal transcript in such cases where the formal transcript is being withheld.

Tuition is a fundamental means by which nonpublic schools cover the numerous expenses required for proper maintenance and operation. For this reason, it may sometimes be necessary for a school to have the option of implementing certain punitive measures if a responsible party fails to fulfill the agreed-upon tuition payment. The tuition agreement between a parent or caregiver and the school is entered into voluntarily, with clear terms. If a parent or caregiver attempts to avoid or renege on their financial obligations, it is essential that the school has the ability to encourage them to meet their commitments.

One of these measures is the withholding of the formal transcript in cases where a parent or guardian decided to switch their child to a different school and is attempting to evade settling the debt owed. Withholding the transcript is a tool that allows the school to incentivize the parent to come to a peaceful settlement. It is not done lightly, but is sometimes necessary. It is important that our schools retain their independence rather than taking away what is often the school's only resource to ensure that the money owed to them is paid. House Bill 505 would remove this resource.

We therefore respectfully request an UNFAVORABLE report on House Bill 505. Thank you.

MD Catholic Conference_HB 505_UNF SENATE CROSS.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: UNF



April 1, 2026

HB 505

**Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student School Transfers - Academic Records
Documentation**

Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

Position: UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in opposition to House Bill 505. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government. We offer this testimony on behalf of the families of approximately 50,000 students served by over 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

House Bill 505 would force schools where a student is transferring into to accept any number of items in lieu of an official transcript, simply because there is a "dispute between the sending school and the student" resulting in denial of records being sent from the previous school.

In the context of Maryland's nonpublic schools, which are nearly 1,300 schools and 138,000+ students, what this legislation is seeking to do is undo and/or interfere with private contractual rights and recourse for schools against parents who have not paid their promised tuition. Nonpublic schools rely almost entirely on tuition to keep teachers paid, lights and heat on, and high-quality curriculum materials in the classrooms, just to name a few basic expenditures. At nonpublic schools, parents sign a contract promising to pay tuition, which schools then use for the aforementioned operational expenses. When parents violate or breach that agreed-upon contractual duty, it makes it difficult or impossible for schools to operate. This hurts the rest of the students, teachers and administrators.

Very often, parents will leave tuition unpaid and then jettison to another private school for various reasons, only to go pay tuition at the next school. They often have the means to pay, but instead leave their previous school without the income administrators budgeted for to pay teachers, maintenance, utilities and for materials or education technology. Thus, this sole avenue of recourse is dire for schools, many of which operate on very thin budgets.

Currently, the ability to withhold transcripts often results in payment or settlement agreements, thus peaceably resolving the situation. **Overly vague terms such as "disputes between" students and schools creates a myriad of legal interpretation questions.** Regardless, the state should not impede free, fair and willing contractual obligations entered into by its citizens. It is for these reasons that we urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 505.

crossover Agudah testimony - HB 505 - Academic rec

Uploaded by: Rabbi Ariel Sadwin

Position: UNF



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 505

PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS - STUDENT SCHOOL TRANSFERS - ACADEMIC RECORDS DOCUMENTATION

APRIL 1, 2026

OPPOSE

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland, and on behalf of the 10,000+ students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state.

House Bill 505 would require schools to accept a variety of items in lieu of an official transcript in such cases where the official transcript is being withheld by the school where the student was previously enrolled.

Tuition is a primary way through which a school maintains its ability to operate. As such, it is important that the schools retain mechanisms through which proper tuition collection can be enforced. On occasion, the ability to withhold a transcript until the parent meets their obligation is a necessary means of ensuring the school receives the funds it needs to pay salaries and properly function. While the vast majority of parents work with our schools to pay for their children's education, there are unfortunately a small number of parents who choose to leave their tuition unpaid and instead switch to a different school to avoid payment. In such cases, the ability of the school to withhold the student's transcript allows the school to obtain a peaceful settlement without needing to enter into lengthy and costly legal proceedings.

We respectfully suggest that schools be allowed to retain a way of ensuring that the freely entered contractual obligation of tuition is met. We therefore respectfully ask you to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 505. Thank you.