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Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Child Care

Gaming

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Derrick L. Coley – District 24

Support of House Bill 1310

Good afternoon Honorable Chair Feldman, Honorable Vice Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education Energy and Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 1310 Traumatic Loss Transcript Notation.

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1310.

House Bill 1310 establishes a process allowing Maryland public high school students to request a transcript notation when they experience a documented traumatic loss. The bill directs local school systems to implement this notation and requires the Maryland State Department of Education to develop standardized language for its use. This legislation focuses on fairness. This legislation focuses on compassion. This legislation focuses on protecting the future of Maryland students.

Traumatic loss can significantly disrupt a young person's life. The death of a parent, guardian, sibling, or close family member can have immediate emotional and academic consequences. Students navigating grief may experience temporary declines in grades, attendance, or academic performance. These impacts may be short-term, but the effects on a student's transcript can last much longer.

House Bill 1310 provides important context. Colleges and scholarship committees rely on transcripts to evaluate a student's academic journey. When a major life event disrupts that journey, admissions officials deserve a fuller understanding of the circumstances. Students deserve the opportunity to have their academic record viewed in context.

This bill recognizes the reality many students face after a traumatic loss. Some young people take on caregiving responsibilities at home. Some support grieving family members. Some must balance emotional recovery with the demands of school. These challenges are real, and they can temporarily affect academic performance.

House Bill 1310 offers a thoughtful and balanced solution. The bill does not change grading policies. It does not alter academic standards. Instead, it allows for a neutral transcript notation explaining extraordinary circumstances. The Maryland State Department of Education will

establish consistent language to ensure the notation is applied responsibly and consistently across school systems.

This legislation promotes fairness in educational opportunities. Students should not lose access to college admissions or scholarship opportunities because of a temporary academic disruption caused by tragedy. This bill protects students at a vulnerable moment while preserving the integrity of the academic record.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 1310.

Thank you for your time and consideration.