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Health Committee

Subcommittees

Elder and Long-Term Care

Maternal, Infant, and Child Health

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Chair Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Vice Chair Delegate Jessica Feldmark
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

For the record, I am Delegate Teresa Woorman representing District 16. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1438.

House Bill 1438 strengthens Maryland's approach to college and career readiness by establishing a clearer framework for high school curriculum, readiness benchmarks, and graduation expectations. The goal is simple: ensuring that when students graduate from a Maryland public high school, they are truly prepared for the next step, whether that is college, career training, or entering the workforce.

Across our state, too many students graduate from high school only to discover they are not yet ready for credit-bearing college coursework. Data consistently shows that many incoming college students are required to take remedial math or English before they can begin their degree programs. Remediation often delays progress, increases costs for students and families, and lowers the likelihood that students complete a degree.

House Bill 1438 addresses this challenge by strengthening the statewide College and Career Readiness, or CCR, framework. It aligns expectations between K-12 education, higher education institutions, and workforce stakeholders so that students leave high school prepared for the academic and professional demands they will face.

The bill builds on the collaboration already required between the State Board of Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, and the Accountability and Implementation Board. By ensuring these entities continue working together when establishing CCR benchmarks

and graduation requirements, the legislation promotes alignment across Maryland's education and workforce systems.

Another key component of the bill is its focus on equity. The CCR framework is built on the principle that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, geographic location, or language background, deserves equitable access to the opportunities that lead to college and career success. Educational research has shown that disparities in readiness often reflect unequal access to rigorous coursework, experienced teachers, and supportive learning environments. This legislation recognizes that raising standards must also include ensuring that students receive the support needed to meet them.

Under the CCR framework, readiness is measured through benchmarks such as Grade 10 assessments including the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP). The Maryland State Department of Education will continue to evaluate outcomes and update these benchmarks over time to reflect changing academic and workforce expectations.

The bill also ensures that students who have not yet met CCR benchmarks by the end of tenth grade receive additional support. Schools will work with students, families, and support teams to create individualized academic plans designed to address barriers to success and help students reach readiness before graduation.

For students who do meet the CCR benchmark, the bill encourages expanded access to advanced academic and career pathways during the final years of high school. These opportunities include programs such as Advanced Placement, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, dual enrollment, early college pathways, and career and technical education programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials or apprenticeships.

By strengthening readiness standards, providing earlier interventions, and expanding opportunities for advanced coursework and career pathways, House Bill 1438 creates a more cohesive and forward-looking system for preparing Maryland students for life after high school.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1438.

Thank you.