



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

**Testimony to the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
HB 318 : University System of Maryland - Textbooks - Availability of Free Digital Materials
(Textbook Transparency Act of 2020)
Position: Favorable**

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dariya Brown and I am the Student Rights Program Manager at Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC). We are writing today to testify in support of HB 318.

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic justice and financial inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

MCRC works on college affordability and consumer protection issues. For many college students, purchasing textbooks is an additional financial barrier to attending college. Prices for textbooks are not always readily available for students when selecting courses, leaving students searching long and hard to find the best deal for course materials.

High textbook costs and the lack of transparency in textbook pricing during course selection cause some students to forgo buying required textbooks, taking different courses, or sharing textbooks with each other students.

HB 318 aims to provide students with clear and transparent information about the additional costs associated with a course and availability of free digital course materials. Students should not be forced to make tough financial sacrifices to pay for course materials they need to succeed academically.

For all these reasons, we urge you to move favorably on HB 318.

Best,

Dariya Brown
Student Rights Program Manager