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## **HB 348 AP Opportunities Act of 2020**

**House Ways and Means Committee**  
**February 5, 2020**

**Ali Keane, Deputy Legislative Officer, Governor's Legislative Office**

Chairwoman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

The Governor asks for your favorable report on House Bill 348 - AP Opportunities Act of 2020. This important legislation gives deserving Maryland students from low-income families the opportunity to take Advanced Placement (AP) exams free of charge. The AP program, which gives high school students the chance to pursue college-level studies, allows them to learn skills that are essential to college and career access, and provides students with an opportunity to save time and money through college placement and credit-granting policies.

Research shows that AP students are more likely to enroll and persist in college, do well in their courses, and graduate in four years. Since success on AP exams helps students save on college tuition and potentially graduate with less student debt, it is crucial that all students with the potential to succeed in college-level coursework while in high school can access those opportunities.

Maryland students have consistently performed well on AP exams. Unfortunately, an equity gap still exists for low-income students. House Bill 348 has the potential to close that gap. The College Board projects that in May of 2020, there will be 20,500 exams taken by low-income students in Maryland. The Governor provided \$1,086,500 in the budget to cover the state cost, coupled with the College Board's existing contribution to ensure Maryland's economically disadvantaged students will pay nothing to take AP exams.

The Governor firmly believes that every child in Maryland deserves access to a world class education regardless of the neighborhood they happen to grow up in and asks for your favorable report.

