



## Senate Bill 538

### *Community Colleges and Private Nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education - Funding*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 30, 2021

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 538. As passed by the Senate, this bill would fulfill the original intent of the Cade funding formula by increasing the State's funding percentage for community colleges.

SB 538 would require the State's funding percentage to increase from 27% in fiscal 2022, to 29% in fiscal 2023, and 30% in fiscal 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter. As a partner in helping get Marylanders into the workforce, counties are in strong support of SB 538 and are excited to achieve a fiscal relationship where the State, the counties, and the students through tuition each pay a third of the cost. When state funding for community colleges lags, additional pressure builds on already tight county budgets and on student tuition. When county budgets face distress from the economic climate or state actions, the local contributions cannot reliably offset these cutbacks – this legislation helps relieve local distress and prevents increases in student tuition.

With unemployment rates at an all-time high due to the pandemic, community colleges have proven to be an important driver for our state's economic recovery by providing training for displaced workers to retool their skills and re-enter the workforce in a different capacity. Similarly, because the pandemic forced many students to return home from their 4-year institutions, community colleges became even more vital by providing necessary educational opportunities and resources close to home so that Maryland's students can stay on-track for graduation and enter the workforce prepared to address the challenges of these difficult times.

MACo stands in strong support of fully funding the Cade formula and accordingly, requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 538.