

Testimony in Favor of HB 1185

To Whom it May Concern,

My Name is Doug Duvall and I am the President of the Baltimore Touchdown Club. I am also a retired high school football coach and educator from Wilde Lake High School, where I served the children of Howard County for thirty-six years. I am in support of HB 1185, and the majority of our membership is also in support of this legislation, because we feel that, if passed, HB 1185 improves the options that our student athletes would have to further their education.

Our organization represents both private and public high schools that play football in Maryland, and, while centered in the Baltimore area, also represents member schools from Frederick, Carroll, Harford, Anne Arundel, Howard, and Frederick Counties. Our mission is to support football programs, football coaches, and the young people that play the great game of football. The BTC provides professional development opportunities for our membership, as well as runs instructional camps in the off-season for players. Our BTC All- Star game, which we host each December, showcases the best senior student athletes the area has to offer, and our Super 22 banquet celebrates the most talented rising seniors in this part of the state. To say that our organization supports football in the state of Maryland is an understatement. And that is why I, as the leader of this organization, support HB 1185; in my opinion, this bill helps student athletes by giving them a second grab at the brass ring of a better future. What could be more important?

Our senior student athletes have been crushed by COVID-19. They have lost the one thing that many of them were relying on to better their situation: a chance at an education and financial assistance to help pay for that education. These students have had to adapt to a new model of instruction, and one that does not work equally for all children. They have had to fight through the technological difficulties that went hand-in-hand with virtual instruction. And in my opinion, we as a state, need to provide them with a lifeline to improve their chances of succeeding in the face of all of those roadblocks. This legislation provides that lifeline and would go a long way to helping students from all communities have access to the same opportunities, regardless of what school they attend.

This bill is not perfect. There are many issues that would need to be resolved before this bill could become a law. Questions need to be resolved regarding who is eligible for this opportunity, how this process is run state-wide, and the application process itself, to name a few. But for those conversations to occur, it should be debated in the light of day on the floor of the House of Delegates. As the President of the Baltimore Touchdown Club, and as an educator who has cared for and mentored young people for most of my adult life, I am asking this committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Doug Duvall
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Position: In Favor