



February 9, 2022

Committees: Environment and Transportation & Economic Matters

Testimony on: SB0152 – Transcripts Prohibition on Punitive Measures Related to Student Debts

Position: Favorable

RE: Testimony in support of SB0152

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports SB0152 that prohibits punitive measures by higher education institutions, specifically refusing transcript requests from students who owe debts to the institution. SB0152 will:

- Provide equal access to individuals facing difficult financial circumstances
- Enable equal opportunity for all members of a higher education institution
- Prevent higher education institutions from employing less favorable treatment to students in-debt

To the members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Lily-Max Cooke, and I am the Director of Government Affairs within University of Maryland's Student Government Association. On behalf of our SGA, I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 152 to ensure students in-debt to institutions of higher education are not refused transcript requests.

This legislation expands equal opportunity for individuals in precarious financial situations. With the rising cost of attending institutions of higher education, and the average student debt in our residing at \$37,000 per student,¹ the need to ensure open access of educational materials is imperative.

This legislation would ease the burden and worries of students who are working hard to further their academic and professional careers. Whether that be through internship application processes, post-graduate school endeavors, and the first career opportunities at hand, ensuring students have access to transcript materials is essential. As a graduating senior myself, quick

¹ Hanson, Melanie. Average Student Loan Debt. Education Data Initiative. <https://educationdata.org/average-student-loan-debt>



access to my transcript has been vital in securing employment, expanding my professional career, and preparing for financial independence as I prepare to graduate this May. Through the punitive nature of withholding transcripts, students who are actively seeking post-graduate work opportunities to begin paying off excessive student loans, are unable to do so without access to these materials.

On behalf of the students at the University of Maryland, we believe this legislation rectifies the undue burden at hand, and kindly request a favorable report on SB152.

Sincerely,

Lily-Max Cooke

Student Government Association at the University of Maryland, College Park

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