
**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
For the Hearing on
Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center - Student FAFSA Data - Reporting Requirement (SB 0127)
March 22, 2023**

SUPPORT

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Free State PTA submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 0127 – Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center - Student FAFSA Data - Reporting Requirement. This bill requires the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center to report student Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, the House Appropriations Committee as well as the House Ways and Means Committee by Dec. 15 of each year beginning in 2023 and ending in 2028. The report must contain the following data:

1. The number of students who completed and submitted the FAFSA in the immediately preceding school year;
2. The number of students who did not complete and submit the FAFSA in the immediately preceding school year; and
3. The number of students who completed the FAFSA by the deadline for eligibility for State financial aid.

Lastly, this bill requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission to provide the MLDS with access to student FAFSA data. Because the MLDS Center advises that the reporting method established under Senate Bill 0127 allows for more in-depth analysis of FAFSA completion data, local boards of education will be better able to encourage and assist as many high school seniors as possible in completing and submitting a FAFSA as required in Chapter 577 of 2021. Additionally, because this bill requires MLDS to disaggregate the information by county and other student subgroups, Free State PTA believes that such actions will alert local boards of education on how to better help our Maryland high school seniors obtain access to FAFSA or Maryland State Financial Aid and thus, acquire financial assistance to attend a post-secondary institution.

Free State PTA and the students and families we represent understand the value of collecting student data to support educational outcomes. It is believed that altering to where the report is sent is an appropriate step needed to provide a diverse analysis to improve students' success rates of college matriculation. It is for these reasons above that Free State PTA requests a favorable vote in support of Senate Bill 0127.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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