

UNFAVORABLE
House Bill 82
Post College and Career Readiness Pathways - Cost to Student - Alteration

House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association opposes House Bill 82, which would repeal the requirement that a county board of education provide certain college and career readiness pathways at no cost to students who meet the college and career readiness standard.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future set ambitious goals for the college and career readiness of students, and rightly invested in making available multiple pathways to postsecondary success. We are deeply concerned by any effort to withdraw those investments. The change proposed in this bill would effectively make rigorous coursework and career-readiness programming available only to those who can afford the associated expenses.

If the intent of this legislation is to implement means testing such that LEAs would cover the cost of college and career readiness programs for some, but not all, students depending on family income or other factors, clarifying language is needed to establish that intent and ensure consistent implementation. However, we must underscore that means testing would create administrative burdens and potential inequities in access. Even if a clear and consistent means testing policy is created, there would likely be students and families who forgo college and career readiness training due to the cost. As written, this bill is inconsistent with the ethos of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

We respectfully urge the committee to issue an Unfavorable Report on House Bill 82.