



House Bill 173

Community Colleges – State Funding - Revision

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: January 27, 2021

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 173. The bill would clarify and strengthen the funding connection between four-year and two-year schools, each with an important role in Maryland’s higher education and job readiness strategy.

The bill requires non-capital appropriations, regardless of where or how they are budgeted, to be included in the annual calculation of community college aid under the State’s Senator John A. Cade Funding Formula. In Fiscal Year 2021, a targeted cost of living increase provided to the University System of Maryland institutions was excluded from the basis for community college funding, simply because it did not obviously fit the too-strict statutory definition for operating revenues constituting the base for that formula. HB 173 offers a pragmatic clarification to ensure community colleges are not similarly left behind.

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. For the past several years, this combined dynamic has led to increased tuition costs for Maryland community college students, at a time when training and education opportunities are most needed for economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

HB 173 would sensibly clarify the calculation of appropriations provided to Maryland’s community colleges. Strong community colleges contribute directly to Maryland’s workforce and will help keep Maryland as a leader in education. For this reason, MACo urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 173.