



House Bill 361

Higher Education – Community Colleges - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 11, 2016

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 361. The bill would increase state funding for community colleges, including the Baltimore City Community College, beginning in 2018.

This legislation requires the State to increase its contribution to Maryland's community colleges. Under this bill, by 2020 state aid for county community college would reach 29% of the per-pupil general fund appropriation to students at 4-year public institutions of higher education in the state.

Maryland counties have supported full funding of the state's community college funding formula, also called the Cade formula. This formula represents the state's part of the shared state-county partnership to support community colleges.

When state funding for community colleges lags, there is additional pressure on 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.

This legislation would increase the Cade formula, signaling a new commitment to community colleges on behalf of the State. This is timely, as Maryland community colleges are at a point where they would like to expand their programs and reduce costs to their students.

This legislation would support policy changes that could allow community colleges to extend free and low-cost community college education and career training access to more Marylanders.

For these reasons, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 361.