



**SENATE**

**EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**February 16, 2011**

**Submitted by**  
**Clay Whitlow, Executive Director, Maryland Association of Community Colleges**

**SB 167 – Higher Education – Tuition Charges – Maryland High School Students**

**POSITION: Letter of Support**

Madame Chair and members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, on behalf of Maryland's 16 community colleges and the students we serve, supports SB 167, which will allow all Maryland high school students to attend Maryland public colleges and universities at in-state tuition rates, without regard to their immigration status. Community colleges have supported this legislation each year since the first introduction of this legislation in the 2003 Maryland General Assembly.

Many of the students who would benefit from this legislation have lived in the United States and Maryland without legal documents since they were children, brought by their parents, and had no choice in the matter. For many, Maryland has been their only home. They have paid state taxes, benefited from a guaranteed K-12 education, only to have the door slammed shut as they begin to prepare for their future and career by enrolling in postsecondary education. It is in the interest of the State of Maryland that all Marylanders have the opportunity and accessibility to achieve their highest academic potential, and not exclude or downgrade any population of our state to a secondary inferior class.

The benefits of allowing this population of students to enroll and pay in-state tuition is beneficial to all elements in society, especially Maryland taxpayers who would otherwise pick up the social costs in other, less desirable ways such as policing crime. Instead of accepting the drain on Maryland's quality of life, here is an opportunity to improve people's future, increase the tax base by providing college training for better paying jobs, and have a productive Maryland with all people having an equal opportunity.

There is no loss to the public colleges and universities. Public postsecondary institutions will not lose money under SB 167. Community colleges are open access institutions; therefore any student seeking to attend can already do so, however, without this legislation passing, these students have to pay out of state tuition. We accept all students who want postsecondary education and training and can benefit from it. A cap on the number of students who can enroll in our institutions would be contrary to the community college mission.

In conclusion, SB 167 not only fulfills life-long goals for individuals, it is a wise investment for Maryland. With 80% of the new jobs in the future requiring some form of education and training beyond high school, Maryland needs to encourage these students to continue their education.

SB 167 is good public policy. Enforcing immigration laws is the responsibility of the federal government, not the State. From Maryland's perspective, it is far better to have every person possible attend college, rather than be consigned to the economic fringe.

We urge a favorable recommendation on SB 167.