



**Senate Bill 795 -- *Community Colleges and Private Nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education – Funding*
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 9, 2022
Support**

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, supports Senate Bill 795 -- *Community Colleges and Private Nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education – Funding*. Senate Bill 795 increases the statutory funding percentages for the Senator John A. Cade and Joseph A. Sellinger funding formulas beginning in Fiscal Year 2024.

MCCC is in strong support for fully funding the Cade formula. Maryland's independent colleges and universities, including MCCC member Washington Adventist University, enroll over 55,000 students each year. Almost half are students of color and approximately 25% are from low-income households and qualify for the federal Pell grants. Financial aid provided by the Sellinger program makes it possible for Maryland students to access and choose the higher education institution that best suits their interests and needs. This aid also provides students with important career development and mentorship opportunities, technological enhancements in the classroom, and operational supports in programs such as teacher preparation and training in STEM fields.

The current formula has necessitated an increase for many years. Enhancing the funding formula will enable colleges to remain affordable, which is a key component to addressing workforce challenges. MCCC members have identified workforce shortages, and the attraction and retention of quality employees, as their top policy concern. Maryland's community college and independent college partners seek to close workforce gaps and address labor issues that have only been exacerbated since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For these reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 795 and respectfully requests a favorable report.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of our nearly 500 members, advocates for growth in business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and a proud Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

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