

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 15-0242R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Henry, Costello, Holton, Stokes, Kraft, Branch, Scott,
Middleton, Clarke, Welch, President Young, Councilmembers Curran, Reisinger
Introduced and adopted: July 20, 2015

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Request for Federal Action – Legislation to Ensure Access to Debt-Free Higher Education

FOR the purpose of calling on the Maryland Delegation to the 114th Congress to support the Schatz-Schumer-Warren and Grijalva-Ellison-Clark debt-free college resolutions; and urging the Federal government to take immediate action to ensure that all American students have access to debt-free higher education at public colleges and universities.

Recitals

WHEREAS, the economic competitiveness of the United States, Maryland, and Baltimore in the global economy requires a well-educated workforce.

WHEREAS, students in Maryland currently average more than \$26,000 in debt upon graduation, which significantly hinders their ability to participate in the local economy.

WHEREAS, current and future young people in the United States, Maryland, and Baltimore should have the same opportunity offered to those who went to college in previous generations, including the ability to attend State colleges and universities without taking on burdensome debt.

WHEREAS, in 2015, higher education is more important than ever because it is an essential step to entering and remaining in the middle class.

WHEREAS, because of the importance of higher education, the United States and local governments should expand the opportunity to pursue and attain higher education to more people than had that opportunity in the past.

WHEREAS, public investment in higher education pays off, as evidenced by the fact the G.I. Bill resulted in a 7-to-1 return on investment for our national economy and that workers with college degrees earn more money, pay more taxes, and rely less on government services.

WHEREAS, student loan debt saddles the very students who most depend on a college degree to level the economic playing field with a burden that constrains career choices and hurts the credit rating of students, prevents people from fully participating in the economy by purchasing goods and services, and threatens essential milestones of the American dream - including the purchase of a home or car, starting a family, and saving for retirement.

WHEREAS, the Schatz-Schumer-Warren U.S. Senate debt-free college resolution and Grijalva-Ellison-Clark U.S. House debt-free college resolution have gained national momentum in recent months, becoming central elements in the national dialogue around higher education.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 **WHEREAS**, a national goal of debt-free college would include significant federal aid to states,
2 including Maryland.

3 **WHEREAS**, there is a deep seated need for Federal legislation that:

- 4 1. Ensures all students have access to debt-free higher education, defined to mean
5 having no debt upon graduation from any public institutions of higher education;
- 6 2. Increases support to States so States can increase investments in higher education and
7 bring down costs for students;
- 8 3. Increases aid to students to help them cover the total cost of college attendance
9 without taking on debt;
- 10 4. Encourages innovation by States and institutions of higher education to increase
11 efficiency, lower costs, and enable speedy and less-costly degree completion; and
- 12 5. Reduces the burden of existing student loan debt.

13 **WHEREAS**, the City Council supports these, and all other, efforts to ensure that students from
14 Baltimore have access to debt-free higher education at public colleges and universities.

15 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that the
16 Council calls on the Maryland Delegation to the 114th Congress to support the
17 Schatz-Schumer-Warren and Grijalva-Ellison-Clark debt-free college resolutions; and urges the
18 Federal government to take immediate action to ensure that all American students have access to
19 debt-free higher education at public colleges and universities.

20 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
21 Honorable Members of the House and Senate Leadership, the Honorable Members of the
22 Maryland House and Senate Delegations to the 114th Congress, and the Mayor's Legislative
23 Liaison to the City Council.