



Testimony on Senate Bill 551
Senate Education Committee
March 23, 2017

Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the Committee. My name is Kyle Thomas and I am the Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Any time a piece of legislation touches on the issue of student transfer between a college and a university, whether the legislation applies broadly to all students, or is narrowly tailored to a specific population as this legislation is, the Commission has a natural interest in policies that seek to ensure that transition is a successful one.

That being said, we have engaged in discussion on this bill with representatives of the colleges and the universities, as well as with the proponent, on what the proper role of the HECC should be with regard to implementing programs on college and university campuses. We believe a more appropriate role, in line with the current capacity and authority of the HECC, would be to structure this pilot as we did Senate Bill 860 of 2015 regarding student mentoring: By soliciting joint applications from institutions to operate a program, disbursing funds to the chosen program, and monitoring and reporting the results to the legislature.

Additionally, I would like to indicate for the committee that, on page 2 line 1, the HECC is given the responsibility of coordinating private fund-raising efforts to provide Foster Youth Promise students with financial support. This represents a significant expansion of the duties of the agency into an arena in which it has no current capacity and expertise, and would likely result in a fiscal impact in addition to that which is required to implement the pilot program.

Thank you for your time. Please contact me if you have any questions to this testimony.