

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

F2

6lr2860

By: Delegates Pena–Melnyk, Angel, Atterbeary, B. Barnes, Barron, Brooks, Carr, Carter, Chang, Conaway, Davis, Dumais, Ebersole, Fennell, Fraser–Hidalgo, Frush, Gaines, Glenn, Gutierrez, Hayes, Healey, Hill, Hixson, C. Howard, Jackson, Jones, Kaiser, Knotts, Korman, Krimm, Lam, Lierman, Lisanti, Luedtke, McCray, A. Miller, Moon, Morales, Morhaim, Oaks, Patterson, Pendergrass, Platt, Proctor, Reznik, Sample–Hughes, Sanchez, Smith, Sophocleus, Stein, Sydnor, Tarlau, Valderrama, Valentino–Smith, Vaughn, Walker, A. Washington, M. Washington, C. Wilson, and K. Young

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2016

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **National Goal of Debt–Free Higher Education**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting statewide and nationwide policy and legislative efforts to
4 ensure that students have access to debt–free higher education at public colleges and
5 universities.

6 WHEREAS, The economic competitiveness of the United States in the global
7 economy requires a well–educated workforce; and

8 WHEREAS, The most recent data for public and private nonprofit 4–year
9 institutions of higher education reports that students in the State have an average student
10 debt load of \$27,457; and

11 WHEREAS, Young people in the United States and Maryland should have the same
12 opportunity offered to those who pursued higher education in previous generations,
13 including the ability to attend institutions of higher education in the State; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2016, access to affordable higher education is more important than
15 ever as higher education is an essential step to entering and remaining in the middle class;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Public investment in higher education pays off, as evidenced by the fact
18 that (1) the G.I. Bill resulted in a 7–to–1 return on investment for the national economy



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

1 and (2) individuals with college degrees earn more money, pay more taxes, and rely less on
2 government services; and

3 WHEREAS, Student loan debt saddles individuals who depend on a college degree
4 to level the economic playing field with a burden that constrains career choices, hurts the
5 credit ratings, prevents individuals from fully participating in the economy by purchasing
6 goods and services, and threatens essential milestones of the American dream including
7 the purchase of a home or car, starting a family, and saving for retirement; and

8 WHEREAS, The Shatz–Schumer–Warren U.S. Senate debt–free college resolution
9 and the Grijalva–Ellison–Clark U.S. House debt–free college resolution have gained
10 national momentum in recent months and have become central in the national dialogue
11 around the affordability of higher education; and

12 WHEREAS, Due to the importance of higher education, the United States as well as
13 state and local governments should expand opportunities for individuals to pursue higher
14 education; and

15 WHEREAS, A national goal of debt–free higher education would include significant
16 federal aid to the State; now, therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the members
18 of the Maryland General Assembly support statewide and nationwide efforts to ensure that
19 students have access to debt–free higher education at public institutions of higher
20 education, including legislation that:

21 (1) ensures that all students have access to debt–free higher education;

22 (2) increases financial and structural support to states so that states can
23 increase investments in higher education and lower the costs of education for students;

24 (3) increases financial aid to students so that students do not have to take
25 on debt to pursue higher education;

26 (4) encourages innovation by the State and institutions of higher education
27 to increase efficiency, lower educational costs, and enable students to complete their
28 degrees in a more efficient manner; and

29 (5) reduces the burden of existing student loan debt on students as well as
30 individuals who have graduated; and be it further

31 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
32 Legislative Services to the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the
33 Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and the
34 Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates.