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BILL: House Bill 1403
TITLE: Education – Next Generation Scholars of Maryland
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POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 1403 expands specified criteria for the prequalification of a student for the Guaranteed Access Grant program; changing the name of the College Readiness Outreach Program to be the Next-Generation Scholars of Maryland Program; alters the purpose and requirements of the Program; and establishes a specified pilot program.

PSSAM enthusiastically **supports** House Bill 1403. This bill establishes a fund to implement the College Readiness Outreach Program, hereafter titled the Next-Generation Scholars of Maryland Program, to ensure an effective distribution of the Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access Grant (GA). House Bill 1403 provides the specific criteria and the critical support that will assist selected students to remain on track from middle school through high school and ultimately be fully prepared to be successful in a Maryland institution of higher education.

House Bill 1403 will mandate \$5 million in FY 2018 through 2023 that could be awarded to qualifying non-profits to administer the Next Generation Scholars Program in counties that have at least 50% of their students eligible to receive a free lunch under the National School Lunch Program in the 2015-2016 school year. Non-profits who administer this program will:

- Identify 7th and 8th graders who would qualify for a GA;
- Assist those qualifying students in completing college preparatory curriculum, graduating from high school, and attending an in-state institution of higher education; and
- Provide other services including a high school graduation plan, summer work or internship opportunities, financial aid literacy assistance, career interest assessments, mentorship and one-on-one counseling, visits to college campuses and workplaces, a summer bridge program between high school and college, and a college graduation plan.

To be eligible for a GA, which provides a full-ride to a Maryland institution of higher education, a student must be a Maryland resident, complete a college preparatory program, be a full-time (12+ credits per semester) degree-seeking undergraduate student, begin their enrollment within one year of completing high school, not be in default on a Federal Title IV student loan, and accept their award within 2 weeks of the date of your award notification.

Seventh or eighth graders who are determined to qualify for a GA must agree, in writing, to the following requirements throughout their secondary and undergraduate career. They must satisfy the attendance policy of the applicable school, refrain from substance abuse, apply for admission to an institution of higher education during the student's senior year of high school, complete and file for federal student aid for each year that they plan to enroll in postsecondary education, participate in the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland program, and maintain a G.P.A. of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

PSSAM applauds the intent of HB 1403 to assist our financially impacted students to be able to attend a Maryland institution of higher education. For the reasons stated above, PSSAM fully **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1403 and requests a **favorable** report.

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