

February 17, 2026

TO: Chair Ben Barnes, Vice Chair Anne Kaiser, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee
FROM: Sean Robins, Director of Advocacy, National Association for College Admission Counseling
RE: HB 700 – Direct Admission Policy
POSITION: Favorable
HEARING DATE: February 17, 2026

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sean Robins, and I serve as Director of Advocacy for the National Association for College Admission Counseling ([NACAC](http://nacacnet.org)), representing more than 28,000 school counselors, admission professionals, and college access leaders nationwide. I submit this testimony in support of HB700 and the creation of a direct admission policy in the state of Maryland.

As of today, 16 states have implemented some form of direct admission. The goal is simple: reduce unnecessary barriers in the college application process and provide students with greater clarity and confidence about their postsecondary options.

There are many successful models. In North Carolina, students with a 2.8 GPA or higher as rising seniors meet one of the core requirements for direct admission. In Riverside County, California, a pilot program proactively sent direct admit letters to 17,000 students who earned at least a 2.5 GPA in required courses. Of those 17,000 students, 13,200 followed up on their offer of admission. Following that pilot's success, Governor Newsom signed legislation expanding the policy statewide so that every eligible high school senior receives a proactive letter of acceptance to a California State University.

Direct admission began in Idaho in 2015, and more than a decade of data show [measurable results](#). First-time undergraduate enrollment increased by 4 to 8 percent — an average of 50 to 100 additional students per campus. In-state enrollment increased by 8 to 15 percent — about 80 to 140 additional students per campus. The most significant enrollment gains occurred at two-year, open-enrollment institutions.

A study published in [Inside Higher Ed](#), drawing on data from Niche, found that the most popular areas of study among direct admit students were health and medicine, STEM, social sciences, and business — fields that are critical to workforce demand and Maryland's economic competitiveness.

HB700 is an evidence-based, student-centered policy. It simplifies the process, increases enrollment, strengthens in-state participation, and aligns with workforce needs. NACAC supports HB700 and urges a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sean Robins
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