

Let Students with Debt Move Forward: Support HB 732 (Del. Carr) and SB 159 (Sen. Hashmi and Ebbin)

Many colleges and universities refuse to provide transcripts to students if they owe an account balance. As detailed in [“Dreams Deferred,”](#) transcript withholding prevents current and former college students from enrolling in additional college classes and seeking employment, as the stories below demonstrate:

- A student attended a public university in Virginia for several years and was one semester away from completing her psychology degree when she found out a loan she was relying on to pay for school fell through, after she’d already enrolled in classes and after the deadline to add or drop classes passed. She was stuck; she now owed money directly to the school. She can’t return to school without her student transcript and has had to abandon her dream of becoming a research psychologist.
- Another university is withholding a former student’s transcripts because she owed tuition after dropping out due to a medical crisis and lost her loan. She has decided to enroll in a community college and will have to re-take several classes to get a degree. This will be difficult because she is working and in the Army Reserves.

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona has called for schools to end transcript withholding, which he describes as blocking student retention and completion. SB ____ (Sen. Hashmi) bans transcript withholding by public colleges and universities in Virginia.

Why Transcript Withholding Should End:

- Transcript withholding is an ineffective collection tool. An Ohio study found transcript withholding only yielded \$0.07 for every dollar owed.
- Ending transcript withholding does not cancel account balances
- Withholding transcripts disproportionately harms low-income students, who are unable to pay their balance until completing their degree and obtaining employment.
- Ending transcript withholding can increase schools’ revenues by enabling students to enroll who previously could not because their transcripts were withheld by prior schools.

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