

Submitter: Amaris Bouchard

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee on Higher Education

Measure: HB3499

I fully support this measure. My mother was a single mom who attended college while raising me. She paid off her student loans 20 years later, and then took on the majority of my recent debt from college. My mother does not hope to own a home in her life due to college debt. I might mention she is a public school teacher who has dedicated her life to teaching K-12. This is not the story one would hope a dedicated teacher and dedicated mother would aspire to.

I would love to return to graduate school to follow my dream of becoming a college professor who impacts adult's lives. To do so now, given inflation and housing prices, would be financial suicide. If I were lucky, I would make 35k a year before taxes as a graduate student- subsistence living. I would not be able to have children, go into any medical debt, or save for retirement or a house during this time. Knowing this, I have not pursued higher education. This is devastating to me and frankly, is a loss to the community of people that I could have an impact on.

In the United States, pursuing higher education is punishable by ongoing financial struggle. This should not be the case. I fully support free public higher education to remove this barrier for families and individuals.