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**Testimony for the House Ways and Means Committee
March 9, 2011**

**HB 470 – Higher Education – Tuition Charges – Maryland High School Students
SUPPORT**

The ACLU of Maryland wholeheartedly supports HB 470, which will make college more affordable and accessible not only to undocumented students, but also to U.S. citizens and non-citizen students who have moved out of Maryland after high school graduation. This bill preserves Maryland's economic and societal interests and promotes fundamental fairness. We urge a favorable report of HB 470.

According to this bill, if an individual who is not a permanent resident seeks in-state tuition, that individual must file an application to become a permanent resident. This provision will likely encourage such individuals to remain in the state and utilize their college degrees. College graduates earn higher wages, and therefore generate significantly more in income, sales, and property taxes. Their increased earning power and disposable income stimulate growth in Maryland's economy. A better-educated population also increases competitiveness in the global economy.

Many of the undocumented students already educated in Maryland's K-12 public school system come from impoverished backgrounds and would not otherwise be able to attend college or university without in-state tuition. Undocumented students who benefit from the bill are, by and large, talented high achievers who arrived in the country as children because of the choices of their parents. They grew up in Maryland and persevered against the odds to graduate from high school and secured admission to a state college or university. Our state universities would truly benefit from being more accessible to a wider range of talented students.

Currently, ten states have similar in-state tuition laws because they realize the importance and benefits of providing students with the opportunity to learn and thrive in society.¹ We hope that Maryland will follow this trend and give all of Maryland's high school students the benefit of in-state tuition.

We urge a favorable report of HB 470.

¹ These states include California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.