February 23, 2016

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, House Appropriations Committee

Honorable Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The National Association of Consumer Advocates is a nonprofit corporation whose members are private and public sector attorneys, legal services attorneys, law professors, and law students whose primary focus involves the protection and representation of consumers. NACA’s mission is to promote justice for all consumers by maintaining a forum for information-sharing among consumer advocates across the country and by serving as a voice for its members and consumers in the ongoing struggle to curb unfair or abusive business practices that affect consumers. In pursuit of this mission, protecting consumers from the deceptive trade practices of for-profit schools is a continuing and significant concern.

We are writing in support of HB 741. As a private attorney who practices student loan law in Maryland, I have worked with students in the following scenarios that demonstrate a need for consumer protections:

- **Quality of Education:** certification programs did not prepare students to take the required examinations, resulting in repeated failures and the inability to secure meaningful employment;
- Students attended computer classes where computers were never used, instructors did not show up, and the schools were merely “hang out spots” with high dropout rates;
- For-profit schools misrepresented their convenience and access to working students with families, often applying stringent, inflexible attendance requirements, and expulsion policies where students could only reenroll by paying high fees.
- **Hidden Costs and Deceptive Loans:** students signed private loans with for-profit schools that converted into high-interest loans mere weeks before graduation;
- For-profit schools advised students that they were receiving need-based grants, which were actually federal loans that encumbered students with high amounts of debt and damaged their credit.

**HB 741 will provide necessary consumer protections for students and their families across the state. For this reason, we strongly urge a favorable report.**

Sincerely,

Kathleen P. Hyland, Esq.
Maryland State Chair, NACA

1215 17th Street, NW • 5th Floor • Washington, DC, 20036