

WALDORF, MD – Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) joined U.S. Department of Education’s Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education Eduardo Ochoa, State Delegate and Chairman of the Maryland House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development John Bohanan, and students from ten higher education institutions in the Fifth District for a roundtable discussion on college affordability. Following remarks by Hoyer, Ochoa, and Bohanan, students had the opportunity to ask questions and share their perspectives on a variety of issues.

“I was pleased to meet and hear from campus representatives from higher education institutions throughout the Fifth District on the issues that are rightfully concerning to their academic communities. By hearing first-hand from campus leaders, Assistant Secretary Ochoa, Delegate Bohanan, and I have a better understanding of the issues that matter most to Maryland’s students,” **stated Congressman Hoyer**. “I thank Assistant Secretary Ochoa and Delegate Bohanan for joining me at today’s event, and I look forward to continued discussions with them to ensure that our State and Federal governments are working to keep college affordable and help students achieve their educational objectives.”

Congressman Hoyer discussed steps Congress has taken to make college more affordable and accessible. This Congress, House Democrats are focused on making investments in education through the Make It In America plan so that our nation can out-educate our competitors and ensure more students can succeed. In addition, the Democratic-led 110th and 111th Congresses enacted historic legislation to make college more affordable, including increasing the maximum Pell grant award to \$5,550, making student loan repayments more affordable, lowering student loan interest rates on need-based loans, and making record investments in community colleges, historically black colleges and universities, and minority-serving institutions.

Assistant Secretary Ochoa provided an overview of the President’s State of the Union proposal to keep college affordable, including rewarding schools that keep college affordable, creating new incentives to promote affordability and quality, empowering families and students to be informed consumers, and redoubling federal support to tackle college costs.

Delegate Bohanan discussed the role that the State of Maryland is playing in making higher education more affordable. The outlook on the State of Maryland's higher education financing for public higher education compares well nationally. Maryland's spending between fiscal years 2011 and 2012 increased 0.1%, compared to a decline of 7.6% nationally, making Maryland one of only eight states that increased State support for higher education in fiscal year 2012. Tuition rates also compare favorably to other states, with Maryland tied for 23rd most affordable. Delegate Bohanan also reiterated his commitment to building on these achievements by continuing to make higher education a priority investment.