

Signed May 23, 1996.

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**Joint Resolution No. 3**

**(Senate Joint Resolution No. 6)**

A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

**Higher Education – Shortening Time to Degree**

FOR the purpose of requesting the Maryland Higher Education Commission to conduct a study of the time it takes to earn a degree, including a review of possible incentives and strategies that could shorten the time to degree; and requesting the Commission to report to the Governor and General Assembly by a certain date.

WHEREAS, A growing number of college students are taking longer than 4 years to complete a baccalaureate, which is generating interest in shortening the time it takes to earn a degree; and

WHEREAS, Reducing time to degree is viewed as one way to reduce the cost of college, cope with fiscal constraints, provide access to higher education for additional students, and produce more graduates in less time; and

WHEREAS, The issue of time to degree has particular relevance in Maryland, where just 24 percent of the freshmen who enter a public four-year college or university graduate within 4 years; and

WHEREAS, Numerous factors have been identified as affecting time to degree, including student preparation for college work, poor job prospects, inability to register for needed courses, and the desire of campuses to maximize revenues deriving from enrollments; and

WHEREAS, A number of other states have implemented strategies, both legislatively as well as administratively, to shorten the time it takes to earn a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, Strategies implemented in other states have included limiting the number of credits required for a degree as well as providing financial rewards to students or institutions, for graduating, or having students graduate, within 4 years; and

WHEREAS, It is time to review the many viable options for shortening the time it takes students to graduate and develop incentives and strategies that can be implemented in Maryland; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Maryland Higher Education Commission undertake a study of the issues associated with the amount of time it takes to earn a degree at Maryland colleges and universities, including a review of all viable incentives and strategies, and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and Governor by December 31, 1996, as provided in § 2-1312 of the State Government Article.