MICUA Maryland Independent College and University Association

Oppose

House Appropriations Committee

House Bill 385 (Frederick County – Higher Education – Joseph A. Sellinger Program)

Sara C. Fidler, President, sfidler@micua.org

February 11, 2020

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students that we serve, MICUA respectfully **opposes** *HB 385 – Frederick County – Higher Education – Joseph A. Sellinger Program.* The bill restricts State aid provided under the Joseph A. Sellinger Program to private nonprofit institutions of higher education located in Frederick County, namely Hood College and Mount St. Mary's University, to be used *only to provide financial aid* awards to students who have graduated from a high school in Maryland. The bill also specifies that these institutions must give *priority for financial aid* to students who graduated from a high school in Frederick County.

In 1972, the Governor of Maryland appointed a panel of citizens from both public and private institutions of higher education to evaluate private higher education in the State. The panel was chaired by Phillip Pear, a member of the Maryland Council for Higher Education. At that time, several private institutions had closed due to severe financial hardship and one private institution – the University of Baltimore – had requested a public takeover. After extensive research, comprehensive interviews of every private college president, and the services of an independent auditor, the Pear Committee concluded that the State should provide modest public financial support to preserve and strengthen a dual system of higher education. The panel wrote that "the savings to the State in tax dollars due to the existence of these institutions has contributed substantially to the welfare and well-being of all of the citizens in Maryland." Further the panel noted that "continued and increased participation of the private institutions of higher education in Maryland is essential for the optimum use of public funds for the support of higher education..."

In response, the Legislature created a system of State funding for private nonprofit institutions of higher education effectuated through a formula that links enrollments at the private institutions and the per-student State appropriation to public institutions in the State. This link provides a rational basis for determining the costs of services provided by the private institutions and encourages cooperation and collaboration among the segments of higher education. In 1993, this formula funding was named after Fr. Joseph A. Sellinger, the former president of Loyola College (now Loyola University Maryland) and a respected leader in higher education.

The MICUA institutions are so very appreciative for this longstanding partnership among the State and other segments of higher education. We have used our Sellinger funds for both financial aid for Maryland students as well as for programs and supports that ensure student success and that align with the State goals as set forth in the *Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education*. In 2018, 89% of the Sellinger funds were used for financial aid; additionally, our institutions provided over $700 million in institutional based aid for low-income and under-represented minority students. Copies of reports describing the use of Sellinger funds at each of the MICUA campuses are available on our website: www.MICUA.org.

By limiting Sellinger funds to *only financial aid*, this bill presumes that a student only needs to get in the door in order to succeed. However, we believe, and our extremely favorable retention and graduation rates support, that students also need to be supported *during* the student's academic career. Some of the supports that have been made possible through the use of Sellinger funds that may not have been possible if this bill were to pass include: improving online content delivery at Capital Technology University; summer bridge, career advising, social justice opportunities, and health counseling services at Goucher College; expanding various programmatic opportunities at Johns Hopkins University including STEM initiatives, early childhood special education, and public safety leadership; exposing students to community-based redevelopment to emphasize living, working, and learning all in one place at Loyola University Maryland; offering multicultural and diversity training as it relates to the arts at Maryland Institute College of Art; career readiness advising and internship opportunities at McDaniel College; career advising at Mount St. Mary's University; expanded nursing education and teacher preparation at Stevenson University; and improving English competency at Washington Adventist University.

By prioritizing Sellinger financial aid for Frederick County students over other Maryland students, this bill disregards the financial need of *all* of Maryland's students. The bill does not account for financial need in Frederick County and therefore would allow for a wealthy student in Frederick County to be prioritized over a low-income student in Frederick County. The bill also does not account for the financial need of a student in Baltimore County, or Prince George's County, who would be required to be prioritized below a Frederick County student regardless of income. Sellinger funding, as it currently exists, allows for the flexibility of making a determination that will benefit the student regardless of where in Maryland the student graduated from high school.

For all of these reasons, MICUA respectfully urges an Unfavorable report.