



**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**House Bill 796**

**Higher Education - Freedom of Speech on Campus - Protection**

**March 10, 2020**

**Letter of Information**

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding House Bill 796. In June, the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents approved *the [Freedom of Speech and Expression Value Statement and Guidelines](#)*.

USM and its institutions hold true to that concept and right. To that end, the System presented freedom of speech and expression values statement to articulate that commitment and guidelines to help our institutions as they navigate complex freedom of expression and freedom of speech-related issues on our campuses. The values statement and guidelines were developed by a workgroup of campus experts and USM staff and affirmed by the USM presidents, provosts, vice presidents for student affairs, shared governance councils, and the Office of the Attorney General.

The free exchange of ideas and information is central to higher education's foremost obligation of fostering both intellectual development and the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share Board's diligent work in this important matter.