

To: The House Judiciary Committee
From: Adrienne Speller, Legislative Intern
Re: HB1260: Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Funding
Date: February 25, 2020
Position: Support

Advocates for Children and Youth is pleased to support this HB1280 and its effort to increase financial support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) in the State of Maryland. HBCU's are critical to achieving post-secondary education, especially for Black students. As reiterated by the *American Council on Education*, HBCU's serve a significant proportion of first-generation students and those that seek financial assistance to afford college. HBCU's continue to contribute to the growing number of students graduating with bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). However, these institutions rely on state, federal, and local funding which is continuing to decrease.

As an out-of-state college student attending Bowie State University, it is difficult to pay tuition and fees; having to rely mostly on Financial Aid, scholarships, and my hope for work study. As recently as late January 2020, I was denied a work study opportunity due a lack of funding. This was not an isolated incident as the lack of funding affected a cohort of similarly situated peers. This is an unfortunate circumstance, as it severely affects my ability to remain enrolled and continue my studies, My academic fate varies year to year as financial aid award packages remain inconsistent, school fees continue to rise, and obtaining school scholarships and work study opportunities seem impossible.

Work study opportunities are designed to support students and offset the costs of receiving a higher education. Unfortunately, insufficient funding and resources for Maryland HBCUs robs us of the opportunity to take advantage of such an imperative resource.

Passing HB1260 will provide financial support for HBCU's that will benefit all, from students to faculty. It will also emphasize the importance of HBCU's for higher education and the need for equitable educational opportunities to ensure resources are provided for all students in need and to guarantee HBCUs have the capacity to develop and maintain programs that promote academic achievements.