



**Coppin State University**  
**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1260**  
**Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Funding**  
**House Appropriations Committee**  
**Chair: Delegate Maggie McIntosh**  
**February 25, 2020**

Good Afternoon Madame Chair, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of Coppin State University, I bring you greetings and salutations. Preliminarily, I would like to take the opportunity to thank this august body for its tireless work in support of higher education in general and our public institutions of higher education in particular. Your continued support has been integral in serving the educational needs and aspirations of the well-deserving citizenry of this great State. I come before you today to share my unequivocal support for House Bill 1260 (HB1260), the Historically Black Colleges and Universities – Funding bill sponsored by Speaker of the House Adrienne A. Jones and a host of distinguished House delegates. It is my sincere hope that this monumental legislation will become law.

HB1260 affords us a unique opportunity to address decades of previous, traceable, state-supported inequities in the unnecessary duplication of programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the State. As the legislation properly articulates, this “... has exacerbated the racial identifiability of Maryland’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities.” As we all know, the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, through its rulings in October 2013 and November 2017 in the federal civil action entitled, The Coalition for Equity and Excellence in Maryland Higher Education, et al. v. Maryland Higher Education Commission, et al., 06-CV-02773-CCB, determined that this traceable pattern, and the State’s failure to eliminate it, were *de jure* discrimination by the State resulting in segregative effects for which the State had no sound educational justification. HB1260 is a specifically crafted legislative fiat that will effectively end years of lengthy, costly litigation, judicial processes, and heretofore unsuccessful efforts at mediation and settlement. The legislation is both substantial and emblematic of great strides by the State to evince its commitment to fairness and equity in support of our state’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities. It should be noted that at the inception of the federal suit, the plaintiffs were seeking upwards of \$1 billion dollars, per institution, for specific and discernable damages suffered by the four subject institutions and their student populations as a consequence of the state’s decades’ long perpetuation of the inequitable policy and practice. HB1260 is a reasoned, measured compromise that places both sides of the dispute in a good posture for moving forward.

HB1260 also serves to bolster the educational reach and service of the state’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities by legislatively mandating more flexibility than the federal suit would judicially provide. HB1260 enables the institutions to utilize the funds allocated for the following:

- (i) Scholarships and financial aid support services;

- (ii) Faculty recruitment and development;
- (iii) Expanding and improving existing academic programs, including online programs;
- (iv) Development and implementation of new academic programs, including online programs;
- (v) Academic support; and,
- (vi) Marketing.

The expansive parameters for the utilization of the funding provided by HB1260 exceed the more narrowly defined guidelines and objectives sought in the federal suit. However, more importantly, they provide enormous and consequential enhancements to the institutions' abilities to service their student populations and surrounding communities in a more impactful and multifaceted manner.

In closing, it is always a privilege and honor to address this venerable committee. I am very appreciative to the committee for the opportunity to convey what I believe to be the imperatives of passage and ultimate enactment of House Bill 1260.

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