



**Testimony to the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 446 : Institutions of Postsecondary Education – Disorderly School Closures
Position: Favorable**

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carlos Rivera and I attend Towson University. I am currently a senior studying Criminal Justice and have attended Towson since August. I want to thank Senators Pinsky, Elfreth, Ellis, Kagan, Lam, Sydnor, Washington, and Young for introducing this bill.

I am writing today in support of bill SB 446 which will define what an orderly school closure is; prohibit a closing school from not properly notifying students of its closure and failing to obtain transfer agreements; prevent an institution from collecting on student debt; and holds executive officers personally liable for disorderly closures.

This issue is important to me because it has affected my life in a very negative way. Before I came to Towson I was a junior at Southern Vermont College. I played for the universities soccer team in the fall and played for the volleyball team in the spring. Even though it was a small school of 400 students I still made a lot of friends. In the middle of my junior spring semester the university president announced that the school was closing due to funding. They told us this way after application deadlines were due for all the Universities that I applied for. Luckily I spoke to admissions at Towson and they gave me an exemption and I got accepted. I lost my friends from SVC, I couldn't continue to play college soccer because Towson University does not have a team, and I lost my scholarship that paid for my tuition. Now I have had to take loans to cover the cost of attending Towson and have worked hard to adjust to moving to an entirely new campus right before I am supposed to graduate.

In the past five years, 17 Maryland for-profit campus locations have closed impacting 6,872 students. When a school closes, students should not be left scrambling trying to figure out how they will complete their degrees, obtain their transcripts, or burdened with paying a debt to an institution that is no longer operational.

Although Maryland cannot prohibit schools from abruptly closing, it can create incentives for schools to close in a way that is less harmful to students and is not an abrupt closure. Clear guidelines for how schools conduct



closures are needed to protect students and ensure that schools cannot close in a disorderly way.

I hope you take this opportunity to protect all Maryland students from experiencing an abrupt school closure. I pray that Maryland students do not go through the same thing I had to go through. I urge you to move favorably on SB 446.

Best,

Carlos Rivera
Towson University Student