



*Office of the President*

**Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 255**  
**Cordelia Postell**  
**February 7, 2022**

Good afternoon, I am Cordelia Postell and I serve as a Trustee for the College of Southern Maryland. Today I share testimony on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the College of Southern Maryland. It is the firm, resolute, and collective position of the Board of Trustees for the College of Southern Maryland: We do not support Senate Bill 254—College of Southern Maryland—Vice President of Equity and Inclusions—Funding and Responsibilities. This bill is in violation of the fiduciary authority of the Board of Trustees. We believe the constructs of this bill to have been created without consideration of the college’s budget and current work on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Board of Trustees derives its authority as an independent governing board in the state of Maryland Education Code §16-606. The Board of Trustees, not the Maryland General Assembly, is responsible for ensuring the college fulfills its mission and aligns its resources behind that mission.

The Board believes Senate Bill 254 to be in violation of Standard 7.2.b of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which accredits the College of Southern Maryland as a single entity serving a region. That standard requires that the governing body have primary allegiance to the college and requires it to be free from outside influence, including political influence. Senate Bill 254 could compromise the College of Southern Maryland’s accreditation.

The Board of Trustees believes Senate Bill 254 refutes the college’s current diversity, inclusion, and equity work. The College of Southern Maryland has been nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute and Diverse Issues in Higher Education for its achievement of equity outcomes. The College of Southern Maryland has been a proud member of the Achieving the Dream network since 2019. This national organization of roughly 300 community colleges, has implemented as its primary focus the elimination of equity gaps among community college students.

Equity is everyone’s responsibility, and that importance is made clear by the Board of Trustees. In January 2021, we set four strategic goals for the college for its 2021-2024 strategic plan. Goal number two (#2) is to “Ensure Equity in All Programs and Services.” That goal appears in every annual work plan within each department and business unit of college; further, the college reports its progress annually on a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dashboard published on its website.

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The board monitors the progress in achieving this strategic goal, and should additional positions be necessary to advance the work, that would be a conversation we, the Board of Trustees of the College of Southern Maryland would have with the president during our budget planning cycle. This is our responsibility, not that of the Maryland General Assembly. Senate Bill 254 would add over \$600,000 annually to the College of Southern Maryland's operating expenses; consequently drawing funding away from much-needed faculty, academic advising positions, and more importantly the sustainable outcomes of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programming.

We, the Board of Trustees of the College of Southern Maryland, urge the members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee not to look favorably on SB 254.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Cordelia Postell, Trustee  
Charles County