

Senate Bill 254
Avis McMillon
Unfavorable Report
February 9, 2022

I am writing to oppose Senate Bill 254—College of Southern Maryland—Vice President of Equity and Inclusions—Funding and Responsibilities for three reasons: it is an unfunded and unjustified mandate, disregards the current equity and inclusion work at the college, and is a violation of the accreditation standards set by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education which requires the Board of Trustees to be free of outside influence, including political interference.

The College of Southern (CSM) is nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute for achieving outcomes, including equity outcomes, and by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* for high numbers of minority graduates, especially in STEM fields. The college has been part of the Achieving the Dream network since 2019, a national organization of roughly 300 community colleges, that has as its primary focus the elimination of equity gaps among community college students.

The college is committed to equity, and monitors and reports progress on a DEI Dashboard on the college's website. An Equity and Inclusion Council is part of our participatory governance system, which has representatives from every constituency across the college. Among their charges is ensuring administrative policies are equitable. The specifics of SB 254 impose a structure that is oppositional to our current and well-recognized equity work. It also detracts from the college's current hiring priorities, which include full-time faculty and academic advisors.

As an unfunded mandate, SB 254 would cost approximately \$600,000. A mandate to hire specific employees undermines the fiduciary responsibility of the board of trustees to set budgets and institutional priorities.

I ask the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee to give SB 254 an unfavorable report.