

Senate Bill 254
Dorothea Smith, CSM Trustee Emeritus
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 two reasons: it is an unfunded and unjustified mandate and it completely disregards the current equity and inclusion work at the college.

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 President’s Cabinet is a talent diverse group of individuals, who ensure that the Board of Trustees’ strategic goal “to ensure equity in all programs and services” permeates all aspects of the college.

The entire 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.

SB 254 an unfunded mandate in excess of \$600,000. It 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. SB 254 would put into law a mandate to hire specific employees, which 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.

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