



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 377

Higher Education - Teacher Development and Retention Program - Definition

March 26, 2024

Favorable

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 377.

The USM is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional higher education centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

USM strongly supports Senate Bill 377, Teacher Development and Retention Program-definition, which reinforces the eligibility of community college students to apply for the incentive teacher recruitment funding. In the midst of a critical teacher shortage, it is incumbent upon the state, the local districts, the universities, and colleges in Maryland to do our best to recruit the best, the brightest and the most diverse candidates to be teachers in our public schools.

This bill formalizes the understanding that students in community colleges are eligible to apply for these funds.

This bill also reinforces Pillar II of the Blueprint, addressing the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, diverse teachers. Unfortunately, there are still significant fees associated with becoming a teacher. Costs for fingerprinting, Praxis tests, student teaching fees, transportation to the schools where the candidates are interns – all these additional fees are disincentives to those who might consider teaching as a career.

The USM urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 377.



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