



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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Chairman Ben Barnes
6 Bladen Street, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong favorable support for **House Bill 1522 – University of Maryland Eastern Shore – Land Grant Institution – Funding (Land-Grant Equity and Accountability Act)**, a bill that imposes a mandated \$5 million appropriation in Maryland’s annual state budget to go towards the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The goal of this bill is to accrue a total of \$321 million to use for the further funding and development of UMES. **This bill is on the 2024 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

The United States ranks first in the world for national college endowments with over \$691 million in funds. However, there are disparities in funding between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and predominantly white institutions (PWIs). For every dollar a PWI receives for endowment money, an HBCU only receives \$1.

We continue to see this same issue play out in Maryland. The Second Morrill Act of 1890 underscores the importance of equitable endowment distribution between HBCUs and PWIs. Unfortunately, a funding disparity between the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) and the University of Maryland College Park (UMD) has persisted between 1987 and 2020, despite mandates set forth to ensure equitable funding for both institutions.

As such, this bill has been drafted to address this disparity. House Bill 1522 will require that the Governor of Maryland include \$5 million in funding for UMES in the State’s annual budget bill for each fiscal year, starting in FY25. This will continue until UMES has accrued \$321 to include funding for new infrastructure, faculty pay, academic programs, improvement in existing infrastructure, and scholarships.

House Bill 1522 will fund the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, rectify the funding disparities that have plagued UMES for decades, and help UMES continue its vital work in its students, faculty, and communities. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports **House Bill 1522** and asks that you vote favorably on this bill.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland