



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3185 • 301-858-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Fax 410-841-3175 • 301-858-3175 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

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Chairman Brian Feldman
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong favorable support for **Senate Bill 1022 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements – Requirements**, a bill that requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission to have a designated staff member to define, identify, and compile data related to the workforce needs of the State of Maryland. It will also require the MHEC to establish a Program Review Process Advisory Council. **This bill is on the 2024 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

During the 2022-2023 academic year, several predominantly white institutions (PWIs) in Maryland were found to have duplicated degree programs from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the state. This act of blatant duplication has adversely affected HBCUs regarding admission rates and federal funding. Specifically, Towson University was found to have copied Morgan State University's Business Analytics doctoral program, violating a 2021 legal settlement requiring Maryland to pay \$577 million to the state's HBCUs for allegation underfunding the schools.

More than 100 HBCUs have provided Black students across the United States access to higher education that has been historically denied to them by PWIs. However, HBCUs continue to face barriers in equal funding and program creation. Specifically in Maryland, HBCUs now have to contend with PWIs outright copying programs that are specific to HBCUs.

Senate Bill 1022 will allow for data on workforce needs to be analyzed and find the appropriate solution to meet those needs. It will also require the Maryland Higher Education Commission to establish an advisory council to determine if degree programs from HBCUs are being duplicated by PWIs and the best course of action. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports **Senate Bill 1022** and asks that you vote favorably on this bill.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland