

SB543_Brooks24.pdf

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BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB543
Institutions of Higher Education – Admissions Standards – Prohibition on
Consideration of Legacy Preference

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 14, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB543, Institutions of Higher Education -Admissions Standards – Prohibition on Consideration of Legacy Preference. The purpose of this bill is to eliminate legacy preference admissions in any higher education institution that receives State funds.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action admission policies, it is more prevalent now than ever to address all favored treatment during our admissions. Legacy admissions gives preferential consideration for the children of alumni. Post this detrimental decision, President Biden, along with the Justice Department and Department of Education, offered guidance that would help higher education institutions “as they continue to pursue campuses that are racially diverse and that include students with a range of viewpoints, talents, backgrounds and experiences.” Further, that guidance noted, “colleges should reconsider whether policies such as preferences for children of previous graduates or children of donors run counter to the efforts to promote equal opportunities for all students.”

Many top universities in Maryland such as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland system do not use legacy preference in their admissions. Before eliminating legacy consideration, the incoming Johns Hopkins 2009 class had more students with legacy status than it had students who qualified for Pell grants. Today, those trends are reversed, with nearly one-fifth of students admitted to the University qualifying for Pell grants and just 3.5% having a legacy connection to the university.

Legacy consideration in college admissions is a practice from a different era and has no place in a democratic society that values, merit, hard work, and equity above all else. Furthermore, any higher education institution with a serious commitment to empowering those from disadvantaged backgrounds can clearly see how legacy preference gives an unfair advantage to privileged applicants at the expense of others. While many Maryland schools have already moved away from legacy consideration in their admissions, SB543 will ensure that no college receiving State funding undermines our Maryland’s core values.

For the sake of equity and fairness in the higher education admissions process, I am requesting a favorable report on SB543.

With kindest regards,

Benjamin T. Brooks

Benjamin Brooks

Testimony in support of SB0543.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

2/14/2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0543- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Institutions of Higher Education - Admissions Standards - Prohibition on Consideration of Legacy Preference

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0543, Institutions of Higher Education - Admissions Standards - Prohibition on Consideration of Legacy Preference

Legacy Preference is an acknowledged problem in providing the continuation of a biased economic system favoring those who already have advantages over those trying to move up in our society.

Bioethics Today has discussed the pernicious effects of legacy admissions in medical education.ⁱ The article concludes:

These concerns notwithstanding, legacy admissions are ethically problematic. Not only do they confer an unearned benefit on the student; they also undermine the widely agreed upon goal of getting more diverse applicants through our doors and into practice. At institutions where most of the graduates are White, considering legacy status essentially *assures* a continued struggle to improve the percentage of underrepresented in medicine (UiM) students who matriculate. What's more, legacy is not just a problem for rural, historically White medical schools: while the U.S. general population is increasingly diverse, with about 30% of Americans identifying as minorities, **fewer than 15% of matriculants to medical school identify as minorities**. Deeply ingrained legacy admissions processes exacerbate these problems of inequity.

The Washington Post reviewed the problem in an article published July 28, 2023.²

The Congress of the United States is also considering bills to deal with legacy admissions. Maryland can set an example for every state on how to treat legacy preferences.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0543.

ⁱ <https://bioethicstoday.org/blog/why-legacy-admissions-has-no-place-in-21st-century-medical-education%ef%bf%bc/#>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/07/28/legacy-admissions-explained-harvard-lawsuit/>

SB 543 Letter of Information.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: INFO



Letter of Information

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee *Senate Bill 543 (Brooks) Institutions of Higher Education – Admissions Standards – Prohibition on Consideration of Legacy Preference*

Matt Power, President
mpower@micua.org
February 14, 2024

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the nearly 55,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of information on written testimony in support of [Senate Bill 543 \(Brooks\) Institutions of Higher Education – Admissions Standards – Prohibition on Consideration of Legacy Preference](#). This bill would prohibit an institution of higher education from using legacy preference as a criterion for admission standard to the institution.

MICUA appreciates the intent of the legislation to prevent an unqualified applicant with familial relationships from gaining acceptance over a more qualified applicant with no familial connections to the institution. While some MICUA members do consider alumni relationships as part of a holistic application process, no MICUA members utilize legacy preference as a criterion for admission. Students who do not meet admission standards are never granted admission due to legacy or alumni relationships. Even when alumni relationships are considered through a holistic admissions process, no student is denied acceptance because a student with alumni relationships is granted acceptance.

Many MICUA members use their extensive alumni network to recruit and attract prospective students. Frequently alumni continue to have a strong affinity for their alma mater and are extremely successful in recruiting the next generation to apply. This strategy has proved particularly successful for several MICUA members.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Irnande Altema, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtema@micua.org.