



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING, HIGHER EDUCATION,
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

3214 Benjamin Building
College Park, Maryland 20742-1161
301.405.2858 TEL 301.405.9995 FAX

Dear Members of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill SB603
University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program sponsored by
Delegates Wolek, Solomon, Forbes, Guyton, and Harris.

As your constituent living in Baltimore City (Riverside), I am writing today to ask you to support college students with disabilities in Maryland and across the country. Inclusive higher education supports academic growth, social development, independent living, and career advancement for a population of students who have historically not had that opportunity. I am advocating for the Governor to include in the annual budget bill, beginning in fiscal year 2027, the University of Maryland, College Park Campus TerpsEXCEED (EXperiencing College through Education and Employment Discovery) Program to provide educational and employment opportunities to students with intellectual disabilities.

As a professor, I see first-hand how inclusive higher education programs support students to postsecondary career outcomes. TerpsEXCEED, University of Maryland's Inclusive Higher Education Program, offers students valuable learning opportunities, meaningful social engagements, and safe and inclusive environments. TerpsEXCEED also provides students with developing internships and job opportunities on and off campus, gathering supervision feedback, and providing direct employment support. This includes goal setting and career planning for each student in the program, leading to outcomes of employment and financial success to continue after the student graduates. It also trains hundreds of peer mentors in kind problem-solving, relationship building and teamwork development, all skills that lead to outstanding future members of Maryland's workforce.

I have also had the pleasure of teaching TerpsEXCEED students in my classes, and have enjoyed having the opportunity to learn, grow, and be held accountable for truly inclusive and accessible course instruction. The classmates that partner and learn with our TerpsEXCEED students have an opportunity to see the concepts about which I teach in action. Peer mentors, who act as guides and supporters, become more facile in both



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social and academic skills. Everyone engaged in this program learns important skills that will create Maryland's future leaders.

On behalf of the department of special education and the Disability Studies minor in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park, I urge you to work with your congressional colleagues on the Committee to provide institutional support for TerpsEXCEED, which also will support expansion of this programming across Maryland.

The future of our state and nation relies on an educated, skilled, and caring workforce. I am relying on you to do what is right for Maryland.

Sincerely,

Katryna Andrusik, Ph.D.