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Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill 603 - University of Maryland, College Park Campus - TerpsEXCEED Program
- Funding
February 12th, 2025
1:00pm
Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the Budget and Taxation Committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 603- University of Maryland, College Park Campus - TerpsEXCEED Program - Funding**. This bill would authorize – not mandate – the Governor to allocate up to \$350,000 annually, starting in fiscal year 2027, for the TerpsEXCEED Program at the University of Maryland.

TerpsEXCEED is Maryland's only fully inclusive postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities and stands as an exemplary model for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE). Through this two-year certificate program, students engage in academic coursework, professional internships, on-campus housing, and extracurricular activities. Since its launch, 21 students with disabilities have participated in or are currently enrolled in the program, demonstrating significant success in improving employment outcomes for graduates.

TerpsEXCEED's impact reaches beyond the students directly participating. The program has trained over 150 undergraduate mentors and established strong partnerships with key state agencies, including the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), and the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD).

TerpsEXCEED currently operates on uncertain, year-to-year grant funding. The proposed discretionary funding would allow the program to sustain and expand its services, benefiting more students across Maryland.

I would like to thank the cosponsors – Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, Senator Feldman, and Senator Waldstreicher– for their support of this important initiative.

This discretionary funding authorization would provide the flexibility to support this vital program. I respectfully request a **favorable report on Senate Bill 603**. Thank you for your consideration.