

SB603 Favorable Testimony ADAgati.pdf

Uploaded by: Amy D'Agati

Position: FAV

Testimony before the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB603 University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program
February 12, 2025

Favorable

Dear Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

Thank you for considering this important bill. My name is Amy Dwyre D'Agati. I am faculty at the University of Maryland College Park in the College of Education, and I am the Director of TerpsEXCEED. TerpsEXCEED is Maryland's only fully Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program (IPSE) for our state's young adults with intellectual disabilities (ID).

I thank the House Appropriations Committee for taking the time to consider the importance of state support for this initiative and the powerful effect it will have across Maryland.

BACKGROUND: What is IPSE? Inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) – also referred to as Inclusive Higher Education - is college that includes people with intellectual disability. With IPSE, students with intellectual disability can develop the skills to live, learn and earn after high school, just like their peers and their siblings. There are over 325 IPSE programs across the country serving over 6000 students with ID – a small number compared to nearly 9,000 IHEs in the US serving roughly 16 million students. Education is a right for all, and TerpsEXCEED at UMD makes that happen. Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Florida are examples of states that offer support to their IPSE programs.

Why the financial sustainability of TerpsEXCEED is important to Maryland:

Affordability for constituents

TerpsEXCEED is the only fully inclusive post-secondary college option for students with ID in Maryland, and therefore the only affordable option for Maryland families. We partner with MSDE/Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) so that all of our students who are eligible and have open vocational rehabilitation cases have tuition, room and board paid for by DORS. Without options in Maryland, our families would have to choose a program in NJ, PA, DE or VA – which either becomes too expensive for families to afford, or our state agencies spend extra Maryland funds to send a student out of state.

Constituent Desire for Growth and Expansion

We conducted a Statewide Needs Assessment at the end of 2023. Our survey was largely completed by parents (n=284) but also included K-12 educators (n=44) and faculty at institutions of higher education (n=37). Our sample ranges across the counties of Maryland with the most respondents coming from Montgomery County, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, and Charles County. The results showed that an overwhelming majority of families and educators believed young adults with ID would benefit from inclusive higher education, were dissatisfied that there is only one option in Maryland and requested that there

be more options closer to their own communities. Faculty at IHEs were interested in learning more and open to the idea of starting programming. In our past three application cycles, we received 30+ applicants for fewer than 10 openings.

In addition to statewide expansion, students and families are requesting that TerpsEXCEED be a four-year program, which would involve expanding beyond the current 2-year programming. In order to expand both within TerpsEXCEED and across the state, current funding options are insufficient. Annually we piece together funds from a combination of one-year state grants, donors, small fees charged to families, and internal College of Education funds in order to cover three part-time staff – a staffing level which in itself is insufficient to support up to 20 students with very individualized accommodation needs and manage the training and scheduling of over 150 undergraduate peer mentors. Past federal funding options through the Department of Education are questionable going forward.

Outcomes that benefit our state economy

Adults with ID historically have high rates of unemployment or underemployment. Research has shown that adults with ID who participate in college programs make more money and work more hours per week than those with no college. With TerpsEXCEED and its replicability, more Marylanders with ID become tax-paying citizens, contributing meaningfully to our state economy. In addition, thousands of college graduates in Maryland who become trained and certified as mentors will enter industries within our state economy with the knowledge, experience and initiative to create inclusive work environments, and have enhanced skills in problem-solving, creative team management, and implementing inclusive practices – contributing to an overall stronger state economy.

Ongoing, sustainable and meaningful funding from the state would allow TerpsEXCEED and the University of Maryland, College Park to:

- Grow and build the current programming at College Park to become a national model of inclusive higher education for students with ID
- Develop a Plan to replicate the TerpsEXCEED model in other IHEs across Maryland, providing guides, standards and technical assistance
- Become the statewide Hub for inclusive higher education that works ongoing with IHEs across Maryland to implement a network of high standard inclusive higher education options for Marylanders with ID
- Ultimately serve hundreds of students with ID and impact thousands of trained undergraduate peer mentors annually
- Build a stronger state economy

Thank you for your consideration on HB458 and we request a favorable report.

SB603.The Arc Maryland. Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FAV



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Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
**SB 603: University of Maryland, College Park Campus –
TerpsEXCEED Program – Funding**

February 12, 2025

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

The TerpsEXCEED program was created in large part by a grant from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council a few years ago with a goal of increasing post-secondary educational programming for individuals with IDD. This effort came after another program, run through the Towson University through a Think: College initiative ended abruptly and left a void in opportunity for people with IDD who wished to continue to learn after high school.

The TerpsEXCEED program provides students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in two years of college campus life, with coursework, living and learning accommodations, and a peer mentor component to promote inclusion and an immersive experience. Students who participate in the program spend their two years at college taking classes in subjects of interest to them, and upon completion, receive a certificate from the Office of Extended Studies. Graduates have gone on to become employed, volunteer, and be leaders in their communities.

Due to generous contributions from school Alumni and other funding sources, the program has been able to survive for the past 4 years, but a more sustainable funding sources must be identified for this important program to continue. SB 603 states that beginning in FY27, the Governor “may” include \$350,000 in the annual budget bill for the TerpsEXCEED Program. This creates a mechanism through which the Governor may include this appropriation designated for the TerpsEXCEED program specifically, and if there are sufficient funds to do so.

The TerpsEXCEED program is valuable resource for adults with IDD, and a model college program for other states to follow. We request a favorable report on SB 603.

For more information, please contact: Ande Kolp, Executive Director
akolp@thearcmd.org

TerpsExceedSupportLetter.pdf

Uploaded by: jillian copeland

Position: FAV

February 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 603
University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program sponsored by
Senators Zucker, Feldman, Guzzone, Rosapepe, and Waldstreicher

As your constituent living in Rockville, I am writing today to ask you to support college students with disabilities in Maryland and across the country. Inclusive higher education support 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.

I am a Mom of a 25 year old son with disabilities who wasn't given the opportunity to attend college. He would have benefitted greatly from this experience; learning with others on an inclusive college campus, belonging to a community at an age that is so challenging, and spending a few years maturing and preparing for adulthood. He was sad that his brothers attended college, yet he wasn't afforded the opportunity. He would have loved being a Terp like his Dad, a proud alumni.

Additionally as a person who started a non profit, Main Street Connect, who works with adults with disabilities, 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 urge you to work with your congressional colleagues on the Committee to provide institutional support for TerpsEXCEED, that 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.

With warm regards and much appreciation,

Jillian Copeland

Mom of Nicol, age 25

Founder and Board Chair, Main Street Connect, Rockville, MD

www.mainstreetconnect.org

Letter in support of SB 603 from Julie Ryan-Silva.

Uploaded by: Julie Ryan-Silva

Position: FAV

February 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing in support of **Senate Bill 603 University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program - Funding** sponsored by Senators Zucker, Feldman, Guzzone, Rosapepe, and Waldstreicher.

I live in Silver Spring, Maryland, and am the parent of an 18-year-old son with Down syndrome. I am also the Chief Impact Officer at the Rockville-based nonprofit Main Street Connect, which provides inclusive, affordable housing and community engagement to adults with and without disabilities. Based on my experiences as a parent and professional, I strongly support SB 603 to provide funding for UMD's TerpsEXCEED program, which offers inclusive post-secondary education to students with intellectual disabilities.

My typical daughter attends the University of Maryland and I strongly believe that my son with Down syndrome deserves the same opportunities as his sister, so I was thrilled when the TerpsEXCEED program was established. TerpsEXCEED students are given opportunities to grow academically and socially while gaining critical employment and independent living skills. The program also greatly benefits students without disabilities who learn from living and studying alongside diverse peers and have opportunities to develop professional skills through mentoring TerpsEXCEED students.

I urge you to support funding for TerpsEXCEED and to help the program become a model for other post-secondary educational institutions in Maryland. The future of our state relies on an educated and skilled workforce including Marylanders of all abilities.

Sincerely,

Julie Ryan-Silva
2418 Homestead Drive
Silver Spring MD 20902

Legislative Letter of Support template.docx (1).pd

Uploaded by: Katryna Andrusik

Position: FAV



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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katryna Andrusik".

Katryna Andrusik, Ph.D.

Testimony-SB603 CTCI 2 10 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Kelli Crane

Position: FAV



COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION

CENTER FOR TRANSITION
AND CAREER INNOVATION

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Guy Guzzone, James Rosapepe, Jeff Waldstreicher, and
Craig Zucker
Legislative Services Building
90 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senators Zucker, Feldman, Guzzone, Rosapepe, and Waldstreicher,

The Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI) at the University of Maryland urges your support for college students with disabilities in Maryland and beyond. Inclusive higher education programs focus on four key areas: academic growth, social development, independent living, and career advancement. We advocate for the Governor to include funding in the annual budget bill, starting in FY 2027, for the University of Maryland's **TerpsEXCEED** (Experiencing College through Education and Employment Discovery) program, which provides students with intellectual disabilities access to education and employment opportunities.

CTCI conducts national research on school-to-work transitions for youth with disabilities, offering professional development, technical assistance, and service evaluations. Our work informs policies that improve transition services and post-school outcomes for Maryland students.

We see firsthand how inclusive higher education programs foster employment success.

TerpsEXCEED integrates academics, employment, and campus inclusion, offering students the chance to take classes, live on campus, and participate in internships with direct career support. Individualized goal-setting and career planning ensure long-term employment and financial stability beyond graduation.

On behalf of CTCI, we urge you to work with your congressional colleagues to draft and support bipartisan legislation that strengthens institutional support for TerpsEXCEED students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christy H. Stuart".

Christy H. Stuart, Ed.D
Director
cstuart3@umd.edu 410-905-5356

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelli Crane".

Kelli Thuli Crane, Ph.D.
Co-Director, CTCI
kcrane@umd.edu 240-418-2684

Griffin-SB603.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Griffin

Position: FAV



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
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February 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 603 - University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program sponsored by Senators Zucker, Feldman, Guzzone, Rosapepe, and Waldstreicher.

As your constituent living in Silver Spring, 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 students with disabilities, 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 and Dean of the College of Education, I have seen first-hand how inclusive higher education programs support students and the powerful impact of TerpsEXCEED on the University of Maryland community. TerpsEXCEED offers students valuable learning opportunities, meaningful social engagements, and safe and inclusive environments. The program also provides students with internships and job opportunities on and off campus. This includes goal setting and career planning for each student in the program, increasing the likelihood of employment and financial success post program completion. Perhaps most remarkable is how TerpsEXCEED students' confidence and independence grow throughout the program. Students truly become a part of campus life, engaging with their peers and academic work in ways that excite and inspire their families, new friends, faculty, and campus leaders.

Importantly, TerpsEXCEED also promotes growth, learning, and understanding of individuals with disabilities for students across University of Maryland's campus. TerpsEXCEED 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. These peer mentors have shared their commitments to supporting and advocating for individuals with disabilities as they begin their professional lives beyond the university. Some have even discovered a passion for special education, growing the number of new teachers in an area of high need across our state.

On behalf of the University of Maryland College of Education, I urge you to work with your congressional colleagues on the Committee to provide institutional support for TerpsEXCEED, that 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Griffin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kimberly A. Griffin
Dean

Peterman_Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Mercedes Peterman

Position: FAV

Greetings,

As your constituent living in Ellicott City, I am writing today to ask you to support college students with disabilities in Maryland and across the country. I strongly advocate for the Governor to include funding in the annual budget bill, beginning in fiscal year 2027, to support the University of Maryland, College Park's TerpsEXCEED (Experiencing College through Education and Employment Discovery) Program, ensuring that students with intellectual disabilities have access to meaningful educational and employment opportunities.

As a former Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Supervisor, in the state of Maryland, I have had the opportunity to work closely with students and families from diverse backgrounds, to facilitate access to resources that promote career success. During my time with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), I have witnessed firsthand the impact that structured employment and education programs have on students' long-term independence and workforce participation. In addition, I have seen how strategic planning, interagency partnerships, and tailored support systems contribute to long-term workforce success for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

TerpsEXCEED exemplifies the best practices of inclusive higher education by providing students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to collaborate with peers, engage in internships and job placements on and off campus, receive individualized career planning support, and develop the skills needed for long-term financial stability. These elements are vital in ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, have access to the same opportunities for growth and success.

On behalf of the Center for Transition and Career Innovation, I urge you to work with your congressional colleagues to draft and support bipartisan legislation and authorization that will provide institutional support for TerpsEXCEED students. Your leadership in this matter is crucial to ensuring that Maryland's students with intellectual disabilities receive the support they need to thrive.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. I appreciate your commitment to inclusive education and look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,
Mercedes Peterman

TerpsEXCEED Funding Support.SB603.pdf

Uploaded by: Meredith Gramlich

Position: FAV

February 10, 2025

Letter of Support in Favor of SB603:

University of Maryland, College Park Campus- TerpsEXCEED Program Funding

TerpsEXCEED at the University of Maryland College Park needs sustaining funding to continue to provide this outstanding opportunity for inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disabilities to live, learn, and earn alongside their same-age undergraduate peers. UMD is the only opportunity for inclusive higher education in MD. Students in TerpsEXCEED are expanding their career opportunities by attending UMD and participating in this career driven program in which they have a course of study that ties to their career interests and career experiences during the program each semester. TerpsEXCEED students are supported by a trained, certified cadre of 169 undergraduate peer mentors who provide academic, social, and career supports to promote full inclusion in all aspects of university life. The intentional inclusive peer mentoring practices are taught and implemented through a peer mentoring certification course, elective upper-level certification seminars, mentoring teams, and continuing layers of leadership mentors who implement mentoring practices to sustain and support inclusive practices to promote inclusion for TerpsEXCEED students in all aspects of their university experience. TerpsEXCEED impacts not only the TerpsEXCEED students themselves, but also the peer mentors who develop leadership skills and promote inclusion in their academic and social communities on campus and will bring these experiences with them as they join their career communities.

As the Associate Director of TerpsEXCEED, Mentor Supervisor and UMD Professor of the peer mentor certification course and leadership seminars, I am intimately aware of the impact TerpsEXCEED has on not only the TerpsEXCEED students and their families, but also as reported by the peer mentors themselves, the professors, the career experience supervisors from internship sites all over campus, dorm friends, teammates, club members, etc. Not only do the TerpsEXCEED students benefit, but the positive impact of TerpsEXCEED is spreading into all aspects of the campus and greater community.

TerpsEXCEED management urgently needs funding to provide quality supports to continue:

- academic course engagement
- campus engagement
- career engagement
- social engagement
- residential engagement
- campus access
- peer mentor certification
- peer mentor supervision
- campus career outreach
- career supervision
- academic inclusion outreach and support
- community partner engagement
- family engagement

TerpsEXCEED sustaining funding is critical for the management of TerpsEXCEED to continue to provide this exceptional, life-changing opportunity for students with intellectual disabilities to access UMD and to enable future expansion of this fantastic model.

Please accept my whole- hearted endorsement and sincere request for full funding of this fantastic program to which I have dedicated my heart and soul.



Meredith Gramlich
Associate Director, TerpsEXCEED
University of Maryland, College Park

SB603.DDCouncil.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SB 603: University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program - Funding

February 12, 2025

Position: Support

The Councilⁱ strongly supports increased access to high quality, inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to improve employment opportunities and increase overall quality of life. In fact, the Council played a large role in successfully advocating for and providing funding to start the TerpsEXCEED program. Specifically, the Council:

- Provided \$50,000 to the Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI) at University of Maryland, College Park in 2020 to create the Hub for Postsecondary Education Opportunities. CTCI provided technical assistance to colleges and universities statewide.
- Provided \$100,000 in 2021 to the CTCI to coordinate and establish an inclusive higher education program for people with intellectual disabilities, including coursework, a course of study, student preparation, and training for peer mentors. **The first two students enrolled in August 2021.**
- Provided \$50,000 to CTCI to expand and manage the peer mentoring training and certification program. **The peer mentoring program helps students be successful in their academic courses, experience campus life, and expand their social network with support from their peers.**

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Allows the Governor to include \$350,000 in the annual budget for FY 2027 and beyond, and appropriation for the management of the TerpsEXCEED program to provide educational and employment opportunities to students with intellectual disabilities.

WHY is the TerpsEXCEED program important?

- **Improves outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities.** Youth with intellectual disability who participated in inclusive higher education programs, like TerpsEXCEED, are more than twice as likely to exit with paid jobs, make more money, and use less SSI benefits than their peers without postsecondary education.ⁱⁱ

While investments in inclusive higher education are without question needed for people with developmental disabilities, the Council believes that the amount, purpose, and timing of such efforts must take into consideration the needs of all Marylanders with disabilities. Funding for this bill should not be offset by limiting essential funding for other critical needs, most immediately the Developmental Disabilities Administration community services that thousands of Marylanders depend upon.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, rldnon@md-council.org

ⁱ The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need.

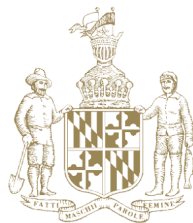
ⁱⁱ *The Importance of Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Intellectual Disability*. Think College <<https://thinkcollege.net>>

SB 603- TerpsEXCEED- Zucker- Senate testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Craig Zucker

Position: FAV

CRAIG J. ZUCKER
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County



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11 Bladen Street, Room 120
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3625
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

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.

Letter of Support TerpsEXCEED.pdf

Uploaded by: Tara Owens

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 603

University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program sponsored by Senators Zucker, Feldman, Guzzone, Rosapepe, and Waldstreicher

As your constituent living in Damascus, MD and working in Rockville, MD, I am writing today to ask you to support college students with disabilities in Maryland and across the country. Inclusive higher education support 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.

I am the Executive Director of Main Street Connect, a Rockville-based community that provides inclusive, affordable living and community engagement for people of all abilities. Main Street has more than 110 residents and 280 members. As a parent of a 19-year-old son on the autism spectrum, I understand the unique challenges faced by individuals who, like my son, struggle in social environments and face barriers in job training and employment opportunities. My son has shown incredible resilience and potential, despite the difficulties he faces in these areas. Watching him navigate a world that often doesn't fully understand his needs has only strengthened my commitment to advocating for better opportunities for all individuals with autism and other developmental differences.

My experience at Main Street Connect and as a parent has reinforced my belief that with the right support, inclusion, and opportunities, individuals like my son can thrive in their own way. It's about creating environments where everyone is encouraged to grow, contribute, and reach their fullest potential.

As a parent and professional in the disability field 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.

On behalf of Main Street Connect and as a parent, I urge you to work with your congressional colleagues on the Committee to provide institutional support for TerpsEXCEED, that 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,

Tara Owens
Executive Director- Main Street Connect

Legislative Support Letter_TerpsEXCEED_Yewon Lee.p

Uploaded by: Yewon Lee

Position: FAV



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education

3214 Benjamin Building
College Park, Maryland 20742-1161
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FAX

Dear Members of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 458

University of Maryland, College Park Campus – TerpsEXCEED Program sponsored by Delegates Wolek, Solomon, Forbes, Guyton, and Harris.

As your constituent living in Baltimore City, I am writing today to ask you to support college students with disabilities in Maryland and across the country. Inclusive higher education support 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.

With support from leaders at the College of Education at the University of Maryland, I had a privilege to work with the leaders and students in the TerpsEXCEED program to create a peer mentor training course that involves traditional college students at the university. Since its launch in 2019, we have garnered great interest amongst traditional college students as this course not only impacted students in the TerpsEXCEED program but also traditional college students who worked with them. I can testify that the TerpsEXCEED program has provided tremendously meaningful experiential learning opportunities for both the TerpsEXCEED students and traditional college students. Just from having conversations from my traditional college students whom I taught, I know that many have found a passion in teaching, rehabilitation, and policy advocacy from the course experience. TerpsEXCEED program has a reach beyond just including historically marginalized students, but preparing traditional college students to become more inclusively minded and civically engaged.

As a clinical associate professor in the special education program, 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 urge you to work with your congressional colleagues on the Committee to provide institutional support for TerpsEXCEED, that 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.

Respectfully Submitted,



Yewon Lee, Ph.D.

Assistant Clinical Professor

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Legislative Support Letter_TerpsEXCEED_Yewon Lee.p

Uploaded by: Yewon Lee

Position: FAV



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education

3214 Benjamin Building
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FAX

Dear Members of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill SB603

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