

P.O. Box 1292
Clinton, MD 20735

February 13, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support of HB0192 -Higher Education - Religious Educational Institutions -
Certificate of Approval

Dear Chairman Barnes and House Committee Members:

First, thank you for your service to the Maryland public on policy and legal issues that impact us the most, especially on matters of education, energy and the environment.

I am writing in support of HB0192, a bill to permit religious institutions that received an exemption from the Maryland Higher Education Commission before January 1, 2013 when the state legislature changed the requirements for **religious exempt institutions who are accredited. The change nullified religious exemption for accredited institutions and required the institutions to seek state certification.** There are eight (8) other institutions of higher learning negatively impacted by this 2013 change in the Maryland Higher Education law, one of which, Washington Bible College, had to officially close its doors.

The proposed bill will still require the nine (9) remaining state religious institutions to bi-yearly file and comply with the Maryland Higher Education religious exemption requirements. Moreover, these institutions had all completed the state certification process and operational prior 2013. An illustrative chart and map of the timeline of events is attached for your consideration.

As a _____ [year] graduate of Maple Springs Baptist Bible College & Seminary, a religious institution that initially received its Maryland state certification as a religious institution on October 20, 1989, Maple Springs has been a foundational and educational stalwart for many pastors, ministers and lay leadership in the state and District of Columbia and Virginia. Maple Springs has afforded me to _____

What distinguishes Maple Springs institution from all other so-called theological institutions is that non-sectarian courses solely Bible-based. The institution over its 40-year history remains unapologetic in its Christian worldview and instruction. Its sole mission is to further the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Maple Springs has been the only religious institution that provides a great sectarian education at an affordable price. With the rising costs of post-secondary education and increases

in the daily cost of living (food and groceries prices for example), having an affordable post-secondary option is refreshing and necessary.

Celebrating its 40th year of existence this year, Maple Springs wants to continue its great tradition by operating as originally certified by the state.

Please support HB0192 by voting favorably out of this Committee.

Sincerely,

/s/ TAMARA DAVIS BROWN

Enclosure