



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
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January 27, 2026

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Chair Ben Barnes  
Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee,

**The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 0060 - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns.** This critical legislation advances public health equity, improves student wellness outcomes, and strengthens institutional readiness to support students living with sickle cell disease. House Bill 60 reflects Maryland's commitment to ensuring that students with chronic health conditions, particularly those that disproportionately impact minority communities, are met with informed and consistent care across higher education systems.

**House Bill 60 directly addresses a long-standing health disparity that has disproportionately affected generations of Black Marylanders living with sickle cell disease.** Sickle cell disease is a serious, lifelong condition that can lead to pain crisis, fatigue, organ complications, and frequent hospitalization. Because sickle cell disease primarily impacts individuals of African descent, this bill is especially meaningful for Black students across Maryland's public colleges and universities, including those attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Establishing formal policies and procedures ensuring that students are not left navigating inconsistent support systems or avoiding barriers to academic success.

Additionally, this bill strengthens institutional accountability by requiring institutions of higher education to implement clear policies, procedures, and campus-based educational campaigns. These measures promote awareness among faculty, staff, and students, reduce stigma, and improve the ability of campus communities to respond appropriately to sickle cell-related emergencies. Increasing awareness and preparedness on campus can help prevent delays in care, improve accommodations and reduce the likelihood that students with sickle cell disease are misunderstood or unfairly penalized due to health-related absences or limitations.

**HB 60 also supports equitable student success by helping ensure that health challenges do not become barriers to graduation and long term economic mobility.** For many students living with sickle cell disease, managing symptoms while maintaining academic performance requires

flexibility, understanding and support. By establishing consistent institutional procedures, House Bill 60 helps ensure that students can remain enrolled, access appropriate resources, and complete their degrees. This bill strengthens Maryland's readiness, and ensures all students, regardless of health status, have a fair opportunity to thrive.

Ultimately, House Bill 60 prompts a healthier, more inclusive, and more responsive higher educational environment. This legislation is a necessary step toward closing health equity gaps and ensuring that Maryland's institutions of higher education are equipped to serve every student.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland asks this Committee to vote favorably on House Bill 60.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland