

HOUSE BILL 912

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3lr1722

By: **Delegate Acevero**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2023

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Institutions of Higher Education – Faith–Based and Religious Beliefs –**
3 **Academic Accommodations Policy**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring each public institution of higher education to adopt a written
5 policy regarding the provision of reasonable academic accommodations for students
6 to practice sincerely held faith–based or religious beliefs; and generally relating to
7 public institutions of higher education and academic accommodations policy.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – Education

10 Section 15–136

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2022 Replacement Volume)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Education**

16 **15–136.**

17 **(A) EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL ADOPT A**
18 **WRITTEN POLICY THAT PROVIDES REASONABLE ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR**
19 **STUDENTS TO PRACTICE SINCERELY HELD FAITH–BASED OR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.**

20 **(B) THE POLICY SHALL:**

21 **(1) EXCUSE UP TO THREE ABSENCES PER ACADEMIC SEMESTER,**
22 **WITHOUT PENALTY, FOR A STUDENT TO:**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (I) OBSERVE FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS; OR

2 (II) PARTICIPATE IN ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY A
3 FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION;

4 (2) REQUIRE THAT A STUDENT BE PROVIDED WITH REASONABLE
5 ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MISSING AN EXAMINATION OR OTHER
6 ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS DUE TO AN EXCUSED ABSENCE UNDER ITEM (1) OF THIS
7 SUBSECTION IF:

8 (I) THE STUDENT'S SINCERELY HELD FAITH-BASED OR
9 RELIGIOUS BELIEF OR PRACTICE AFFECTS THE STUDENT'S ABILITY TO TAKE AN
10 EXAMINATION AS SCHEDULED OR MEET ANY OTHER ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT; AND

11 (II) NOT LATER THAN 14 DAYS AFTER THE FIRST DAY OF
12 INSTRUCTION IN THE COURSE, THE STUDENT PROVIDES THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR
13 WITH WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE SPECIFIC DATES FOR WHICH THE STUDENT
14 REQUESTS AN ACCOMMODATION UNDER THE POLICY;

15 (3) REQUIRE A COURSE INSTRUCTOR TO:

16 (I) ACCEPT THE SINCERITY OF A STUDENT'S FAITH-BASED OR
17 RELIGIOUS BELIEF SYSTEM;

18 (II) KEEP STUDENT REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC
19 ACCOMMODATIONS CONFIDENTIAL;

20 (III) SCHEDULE A REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE TIME AND DATE
21 FOR ADMINISTRATION OF A MISSED OR ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATION OR OTHER
22 ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED
23 TIME AND DATE OF THE EXAMINATION OR ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT; AND

24 (IV) INCLUDE ON THE COURSE SYLLABUS A SUMMARY OF THE
25 INSTITUTION'S POLICY, INCLUDING CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MORE
26 INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY; AND

27 (4) INCLUDE A GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE TO REPORT
28 NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY.

29 (C) EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS REQUIRED TO
30 PROVIDE A SPACE ON CAMPUS FOR FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

1 **(D) EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL POST**
2 **PROMINENTLY ON ITS WEBSITE:**

3 **(1) A COPY OF THE POLICY ADOPTED UNDER THIS SECTION; AND**

4 **(2) A NONEXHAUSTIVE LIST OF MAJOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS OR**
5 **FESTIVALS FOR THE NEXT 2 CALENDAR YEARS DEVELOPED AND PROVIDED TO THE**
6 **INSTITUTION BY THE COMMISSION.**

7 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July**
8 **1, 2023.**