

SENATE BILL 208

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SB 524/25 – EEE

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1615
CF HB 192

By: **Senator Charles**

Requested: October 31, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Higher Education Commission – Religious Educational Institutions –**
3 **Certificate of Approval**

4 FOR the purpose of exempting certain religious educational institutions accredited by
5 certain accrediting bodies from the requirement to obtain a certificate of approval
6 from the Maryland Higher Education Commission to operate in the State; and
7 generally relating to religious educational institutions and a certificate of approval.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
9 Article – Education
10 Section 10–101(a) and (c)
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
14 Article – Education
15 Section 11–202.1(b)
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

20 **Article – Education**

21 10–101.

22 (a) In this division the following words have the meanings indicated.

23 (c) “Commission” means the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 11-202.1.

2 (b) (1) Subject to the requirements imposed by this section, and except as
3 prohibited in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a religious educational institution may
4 operate without a certificate of approval from the Commission and may enroll Maryland
5 students in a fully online distance education program in the State without a registration
6 from the Commission if the institution:

7 (i) Is established for religious educational purposes;

8 (ii) Provides educational programs only for religious vocations or
9 purposes;

10 (iii) Offers only sectarian instruction designed for and aimed at
11 individuals who hold or seek to learn the particular religious faiths or beliefs taught by the
12 institution; and

13 (iv) States on the certificate or diploma the religious nature of the
14 award.

15 (2) (I) **THIS PARAGRAPH DOES NOT APPLY TO A RELIGIOUS**
16 **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION THAT WAS AUTHORIZED TO OPERATE IN THE STATE**
17 **AND HAS BEEN IN CONTINUOUS OPERATION IN THE STATE SINCE BEFORE JANUARY**
18 **1, 2013.**

19 (II) A religious educational institution that is accredited by an
20 accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education may not operate
21 without a certificate of approval from the Commission.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
23 1, 2026.