

# SENATE BILL 983

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CF HB 1628

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By: **Senator McCray**

Introduced and read first time: February 15, 2026

Assigned to: Rules

Re-referred to: Education, Energy, and the Environment, February 22, 2026

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2026

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Academic Program Approval – Objections Process**  
3 **Alteration and Study**

4 FOR the purpose of repealing the requirement that a proposed new academic program be  
5 a graduate program in order for the Maryland Higher Education Commission or  
6 certain institutions of higher education to file an objection to implementation of the  
7 proposed program; requiring the Program Review Process Advisory Council to study  
8 and make recommendations on extending the objection process for proposed  
9 academic programs to include certain new undergraduate programs with  
10 consideration of certain legal precedence regarding unnecessary program  
11 duplication; and generally relating to objections to proposed new academic programs.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
13 Article – Education  
14 Section 11–206.1(e)(1)  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

19 **Article – Education**

20 11–206.1.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (e) (1) Within 30 days of receipt of a notice of an institution's intent to submit  
2 a new program to the Commission in accordance with subsection (b) of this section, the  
3 Commission may file, or the institutions of higher education in the State may file with the  
4 Commission, an objection to implementation of a proposed [graduate] program provided  
5 the objection is based on:

6 (i) Inconsistency of the proposed program with the institution's  
7 approved mission for a public institution of higher education and the mission statement  
8 published in the official catalog of a private nonprofit institution of higher education;

9 (ii) Not meeting a regional or statewide need consistent with the  
10 State Plan for Higher Education;

11 (iii) Unreasonable program duplication which would cause harm to  
12 the State or students attending institutions of higher education in the State; or

13 (iv) Unnecessary program duplication in violation of the State's  
14 equal educational opportunity obligations under State and federal law.

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

16 (a) The Program Review Process Advisory Council within the Maryland Higher  
17 Education Commission shall study and make recommendations on extending the objection  
18 process for proposed academic programs under § 11-206.1 of the Education Article to  
19 include new undergraduate programs proposed by a public institution of higher education  
20 or a private nonprofit institution of higher education with consideration of relevant federal  
21 and State legal precedence regarding unnecessary program duplication.

22 (b) On or before December 31, 2026, the Program Review Process Advisory  
23 Council shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Senate Education,  
24 Energy, and the Environment Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, in  
25 accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

26 SECTION ~~2~~ 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
27 July 1, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2027,  
28 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and  
29 of no further force and effect.