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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SPONSOR STATEMENT**

**Senate Bill 553 – Universities at Shady Grove Regional Higher Education Center**

February 12, 2020

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Established in 2000, The Universities at Shady Grove (USG) is a University System of Maryland (USM) Regional Higher Education Center (RHEC) offering upper level undergraduate and graduate degree programs from nine public Maryland universities in one campus in Montgomery County. Participating USM institutions include: Bowie State University (BSU); Salisbury University (SU); Towson University (TU); University of Baltimore (UB); University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB); University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC); University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP); University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), and University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC-formerly UMUC).

Students apply directly to the university offering their chosen major, and on the application, they simply select USG as their preferred campus location. The professors, curriculum, and degree are provided by the home university, but students at the USG campus benefit from small class sizes, increased scholarship opportunities, and an array of customized on-site services and student life - leading to a more personalized, cost-effective, and time-saving path to degree completion.

USG's innovative and pioneering partnership approach to higher education is designed to connect local college students to outstanding career opportunities, while providing regional employers with a highly educated, skilled workforce. Only the upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses are offered on the USG campus, fostering a supportive environment of students focused on completing their degrees and advancing their careers.

Under current law, USG is included as "...any other center, ... established and operated by USM in accordance with its mission..." Senate Bill 553 will codify the existence and purpose of the Universities at Shady Grove as well as codifying that funding for USG shall be provided in the State budget.

The Universities at Shady Grove have become a proven model of success for students and an economic engine for the state and it is time to codify them with other centers and institutes as components of the University System of Maryland and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 553.