

House Bill 184
University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of
Maryland - Board Membership – Alterations
House Appropriations Committee
February 10, 2021

Urging an Unfavorable Report

Chair McIntosh, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding House Bill 184. This Bill would unnecessarily change the membership of the St. Mary's College Board of Trustees to require appointment of individuals with specific, narrow, expertise in selected areas of institutional management.

Board membership should include not only a commitment to the mission of the institution, but also be directed to the specific expertise the institution needs to address its mission and/or dynamic strategic priorities. Strategic priorities are developed collaboratively by the trustees and the president of the College in consultation with the faculty. The skillset described in the proposed legislation represents management, not strategic board-level, competency areas.

Further, regulating from the State level particular areas of narrowly defined expertise sets a poor precedence. There is an unlimited number of specialized areas of expertise beyond those identified in the bill that could also be required through legislation. The State should not define each possible area of expertise that may be relevant to the management of an institution.

St. Mary's College has a long history of commitment to diversity, equality, and shared governance. Respect for the rights of all people is fundamental to our mission. This commitment is articulated in The St. Mary's Way, which states, in part:

- Where people respect ... the tradition of tolerance, which is the heritage of this place
- Where people are engaged in an ongoing dialogue that values differences and the unique contributions of others' talents, backgrounds, customs, and world views

In summary, House Bill 184 could negatively affect the governance of St. Mary's College without meaningfully enhancing its management of the specific areas of competency stipulated in the bill and needlessly expands our governing board to 30 members.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of St. Mary's College of Maryland.


Tuajuanda C. Jordan, Ph.D.
President

