



# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

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## **HOUSE BILL 1268 Legal Education Success Collaborative – Established (Henson)**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE: March 11, 2021**

**COMMITTEE: House Appropriations**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** HB 1268 mandates an annual appropriation in the amount of \$450,000 to the Legal Education Success Collaborative, which includes the University of Baltimore School of Law, the University of Maryland School of Law, and the Maryland Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). The Collaborative's mission is to increase diversity in the legal profession through financial support, mentorship, and professional development. Funds are to be distributed as follows: \$200,000 to UB Law; \$200,000 to UofMD Law; and \$50,000 to support a coordinator position at one HBCU selected by the Maryland Higher Education Commission who will promote the scholars program to all HBCU students.

**EXPLANATION:** The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the increase in the original mandated funding for this program. DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which requires spending allocations for FY 2022 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2020.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19, making revenue predictions for the remainder of FY 2021 and FY 2022 highly volatile. Many individuals and households are unemployed or underemployed, with many industry sectors operating at much less than 100% capacity. Federal stimulus programs are providing much needed relief, but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability.

The General Assembly and Administration have successfully enacted the Governor's emergency Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act (SB 496 RELIEF Act), which provides \$1.2 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is incumbent upon us to allow the impact of this unprecedented relief package on the State's economy to take effect. Further mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of an ongoing pandemic.

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