



NAACP

Maryland

STATE CONFERENCE

Testimony of the NAACP Maryland State Conference
Steven Waddy, Political Action Chair of Anne Arundel County
HB 1268 – Legal Education Success Collaborative –
Established House Appropriations

NAACP URGES FAVORABLE REPORT

The NAACP urges a favorable report for **HB 1268 Legal Education Success Collaborative - Established.**

This Bill will establish the Legal Education Success Collaborative between the University of Baltimore School of Law (UB), the University of Maryland School of Law, and the Maryland historically Black colleges and Universities to increase diversity in the legal field. The NAACP is keenly aware of the need for Black attorneys in Maryland.

Eighty-three years ago, Justice Thurgood Marshall joined with Charles Hamilton Houston on a strategy to “break the back” of the separate but equal system that was created by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court ruling. The first case that Thurgood Marshall won with this new strategy was *Pearson v. Murray*.¹ In this case, Donald Gaines Murray won attendance at the University of Maryland School of Law, which never before has admitted a Black student despite the fact that it was the first law school in the United States. Due to Thurgood Marshall’s success, Black law student enrollment has increased substantially but it’s still relatively low in comparison to white enrollment across the State.

HB 1268 would provide the University of Maryland and UB with the funds to carry on Thurgood Marshall and Donald Murray’s legacies of increasing Black law student enrollment.

On a separate note, the State of Maryland is a major employer of lawyers and passing this bill is one method of modeling the best practices for diversity and recruitment for private firms where Black lawyers are woefully underrepresented. The National Association for Law Placement, a national organization dedicated to helping law school graduates find jobs in the industry, states in its 2020 Diversity Best Practices Guide that one of the methods law firms can improve recruitment is to “fund minority law student scholarships for students attending area law schools.”²

The NAACP urges a favorable report for this important legislation.

¹ *Pearson, et al v. Murray*, 182 A. 590, 169 Md. 478, 103 A.L.R. 706 No. 53., Jan. 15, 1936

² Diversity Best Practices Guide, 2020 Edition, National Association for Law Placement, Pg 18.
https://www.nalp.org/uploads/2020_DiversityBestPracticesGuide.pdf

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