

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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January 19, 2021

House Bill 1 - Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Funding POSITION: Support

Dear Chairperson McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 1 establishes a foundation by which Maryland can begin to achieve funding parity for Maryland’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which include Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. HB1 mandates that the Governor set aside, for inclusion in addition to each institution’s usual annual appropriation, an additional \$577 million beginning in FY2023 through FY2032. The Maryland Higher Education Commission is also required to create a unit of at least 10 staff members to monitor and ensure that these funds are expended in accordance with HB1 and the orders issued by the United States District Court for the District of Maryland in the case of *The Coalition For Equity and Excellence in Maryland Higher Education, et al. v. Maryland Higher Education Commission, et al.*

For decades, Maryland’s HBCUs have been chronically underfunded because of alleged duplication of academic programs and services that were purportedly provided at other University System of Maryland institutions. It has been found in the United States District Court, however, that this rationale is weak, at best, and has only been used to further deprive these institutions of the equitable and adequate support needed to serve their respective communities that would otherwise not have access to a quality higher education within Maryland.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights strongly urges the passage of HB1. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.