



Testimony in Support of House Bill 1
Historically Black Colleges and Universities – Funding
House Appropriations Committee
January 19, 2021

The Maryland State Conference (MSC) of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) strongly supports House Bill 1, Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Funding, requiring the state of Maryland remedy the disparity in academic programs and secure full and adequate funding for the state's HBCUs.

The NAACP works to ensure that all disadvantaged students and students of color are on the path to college or a successful career by ensuring access to great teaching, equitable resources, and a challenging curriculum. We are dedicated to eliminating the severe racial inequities that continue to plague our education system that impact the way in which all programmatic decisions are reviewed and challenged.

Our ultimate goal is that every student of color receives a quality public education that prepares young people to be contributing members of our democracy. To achieve these goals, the NAACP Maryland State Conference advocates a four-prong strategy to improve educational achievement for disadvantaged students:

- Increasing Resource Equity: Target funds to neediest kids
- Ensuring College & Career Readiness: A path to success after graduation for all students
- Improving Teaching: Growing our own great teachers now in underserved communities
- Improving Discipline: Eliminate zero tolerance; keep kids in school

It is for this reason that we urge the State of Maryland to implement high demand academic programs for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, provide Maryland HBCUs with additional funding, marketing, and scholarships, and to replace programs that were unconstitutionally duplicated for decades.

It is imperative that the State of Maryland begins to make it a priority to examine decisions for any policy, program, practice, or action with an equity lens and repair the historical financial disparities that have been a hindrance to the development of HBCUs.



Page 2. NAACP MSC

In the implementation of this legislation, the NAACP MSC joins the Maryland Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) Advocates in calling upon the General Assembly to:

- 1) Require the Maryland Higher Education Commission to establish certain new units to assist in evaluating and reviewing certain proposals for new programs and substantial modifications of existing programs;
- 2) Require the Governor, in each of fiscal years 2022 through 2031, to include in the annual State operating budget \$57,700,000 to be allocated to certain historically black colleges and universities;
- 3) Establish the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Reserve Fund; specifying the purpose and uses of the Fund; etc.

HBCUs have made invaluable contributions to education and equity in our state and play a critical role in the American higher education system. Equity should be a means of providing access, opportunities, and supports needed to help students reach their full potential by removing barriers to success. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "The time is always right to do what is right."

It's time for Governor Hogan and lawmakers across Maryland to do the right thing and provide a full and adequate settlement for the state's HBCUs to remedy decades of injustice. For these reasons, The Maryland State Conference urges the committees to issue favorable reports for House Bill 1.

Adrienne Dillahunt, NAACP MSC
Education Co-Chair
District 29B

Laura Johnson, NAACP MSC
Education Co-Chair
PCDistrict 13

Willie Flowers, President
Rev. Kobi Little, 1st Vice President, and Political Action Chair