

Testimony of Dr. Linda Girdner on behalf of Showing Up for Racial Justice, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chapter, in support of SB0001.

The Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice supports the full funding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Maryland as outlined in SB1043. Anything short of that would be continuing the path of treating HBCUs as the stepchildren of Maryland's public college education and perceiving the students as second class citizens.

HBCU students are more likely to be the first in their families to attend college compared to students at other campuses. Why did their parents and grandparents not have that opportunity? Largely due to the wealth gap, which allowed many whites after WWII to go to college and to send their children to college --to move into the middle class. That is what happened in my family. My father grew up in poverty and knew the GI bill was the only way he could go to college. It was the only way he could have purchased a home for his growing family. My family and that of millions of white Americans were able to attain the American dream, accrue wealth, and pass it on to their children and grandchildren. The same opportunities were not available to African Americans, because of the racist policies of colleges and mortgage lenders. (Thurgood Marshall, then with the NAACP, filed suit to desegregate the University of Maryland.)

Considering this wealth gap, it is no surprise that students at HBCUs are more likely to need grants and scholarships to go to college and to complete their degree. They often attended schools that were under-resourced, because they lived in neighborhoods that did not have the tax base to support the costs of better schools. We can look to the racist policies, such as residential redlining and restrictive covenant further prevented black families from gaining financial ground and being able to move into neighborhoods with better resourced schools. Some who managed to move in such neighborhoods ended up being taken advantage of by predatory loan practices, i.e. reverse redlining, that sent them right back to square one after the recession.

Students at HBCUs already have faced hurdles to get this far. Scholarships are needed to help more African American people be able to attend and to assist students in being able to complete their education instead of dropping out due to finances. HBCUs deserve the resources to be able to have cutting edge programs that put their students at the forefront of future opportunities in the job market. So that they can move forward, contributing to communities and building the wealth that so many previous generations were denied. HBCUs also deserve to have their unique, high-demand academic programs protected, and unduplicated by other Maryland colleges and universities so

that the applicants and prospective students they attract are not drawn away from the HBCU campuses due to lack of resources, scholarships, or qualified faculty.

You did not cause all the racial inequities that are part and parcel of Maryland's history. But, as elected officials, you have the power, the privilege, and the responsibility to do something to rectify this piece of it. We urge you to support SB0001.

Linda K. Girdner, Ph.D.

Showing Up for Racial Justice,

Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chapter