

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Bill 49
State Government - Department of Information Technology - Cybersecurity
February 2, 2021
Support with Amendment
Michael Eismeier
Assistant Vice Chancellor for IT and Interim CIO

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on Senate Bill 49. Senate Bill 49 expands the responsibilities of the Secretary of Information Technology to include (1) advising and consulting with the Legislative and Judicial branches of State government regarding a cybersecurity strategy and (2) in consultation with the Attorney General, advising and overseeing a consistent cybersecurity strategy for units of State government, including institutions under the control of the governing boards of the public institutions of higher education, counties, municipal corporations, school districts, and all other political subdivisions of the State.

The University System of Maryland (USM) has developed cybersecurity policies and procedures appropriate for higher education institutions that may differ considerably from the state agency environment. Although these protocols maintain a functional compatibility with state cybersecurity policies and procedures, the research-intensive environment of our institutions demand protocols that may be unfamiliar to state information technology managers.

Systemwide policies are vetted through the Board of Regents (BOR) approved Cybersecurity Standards under the advisement of the Office of Legislative Audits – the same standards against which the USM is audited. USM utilizes the same National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) framework that the state has used. Additionally, USM technology managers are rewriting version 5 of our standards to adopt more advanced NIST and federal practices.

Senate Bill 49 would require that USM institutions adhere to a one-size-fits-all set of policies and procedures administered by the Secretary of Information Technology. However, the USM has deployed cybersecurity best practices tailored to meet the diverse mission of each institution. Adherence to DoIT's IT Security policies and protocols will have a crippling financial impact on USM, particularly at our largest institutions like UM College Park and UM Baltimore and Regional Higher Education Centers (e.g. Universities at Shady Grove), in order to become compliant with both USM and DoIT policies. Doing so would likewise, provide no additional value to USM in terms of its cybersecurity posture. It is our desire to retain our autonomy. The USM respectfully requests an amendment to be excluded from the requirements called for under Senate Bill 49.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share these concerns regarding Senate Bill 49.