

Randall Ainsworth SB 256 Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV

Randall Phillip Ainsworth

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 526
Before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 25, 2021**

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, my name is Randall Ainsworth. I am a first-year law student at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and the inaugural Elijah Cummings Scholar. As a member of Maryland Law's Diversity and Inclusions Scholars Initiative, I am pleased to join Dean Tobin in expressing my strong support for SB 256.

I was born and raised in the inner city of Baltimore. I was raised in a single parent home by my mother who told me that I was born with 3 strikes against me. I was black, I was from a single parent home, and I was poor, and she always told me that good enough was never enough. I had to strive to be better to try to level the playing field.

I have seen my share of struggles from a young age. I have experienced prejudice, economic hardships, and homelessness. I spent the majority of my high school and college years finding places to complete my assignments because I lived without electricity. Winter was always the hardest because the daylight seemed few and far between. It was like a symbolism for my life.

One of my hardest memories was in high school when I ran for student government and I lost. It wasn't because I did not have the votes, the tenacity, or experience. I was told that the deciding factor was that the other kids dad was a judge. I imagine that made him more valuable to the school, more valuable to the world....more valuable than me.

This was one of those strikes that I was warned about.

His dad was not only a judge, but he was present. This was two of those strikes that I was warned about. It was a hard lesson to learn.

My story is just one of many stories, from inner city youth who are bright, capable, and eager, but has those same three strikes against them. Kids like I was who did not have a dad who is a judge, or money to fix problems.

The diversity and inclusion scholarship for me was an avenue to level the playing field. It was one less strike to worry about. It afforded me the opportunity to attend law school without putting further strain on my family and it gave me an opportunity to begin life without that strike lingering over my shoulder.

With the diversity and inclusion scholarship, I was given an opportunity to attend the best law school in Maryland. I am able not only to fulfill my dream to be an attorney, but I am able to develop relationships and form lifelong friendships with likeminded individuals.

The diversity and inclusion scholarship gave me a new definition of like kind. Like kind no longer means, the poor kid, or the kid without the dad, or even the black kid. Like kind means other individuals with a dream, focus and a passion for the law.

I am grateful for this scholarship and I am an advocate, not only because of how it has benefited me, but because of how these scholarships will make a difference for those who are coming behind me.

I am an advocate because there are kids, right here in my community where there is violence and poverty and hopelessness. There are kids who need hope.

There are kids who need a chance to be redeemers of their bloodlines and change the dynamics of their families. Without these scholarships many of us will never have a chance to reach our potential and many will stop dreaming.

My name is Randall Ainsworth. I am a University of Maryland Carey Law school student. In 2 years, I will be an attorney, and one day a judge. I am an agent of change and there are others just like me. And like pearls we are a product of our environment. It is our environment that made us who we are and all we need is the opportunity to be who we are. The Diversity and Inclusion Scholars Initiative gives us that opportunity.

For these reasons, I ask you to support SB 256. Thank you!

TESTIMONY OF MAYA A DOLBY.pdf

Uploaded by: Dolby, Maya

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**TESTIMONY OF MAYA A. DOLBY
GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE SCHOOL OF LAW AND 2016
SCHOLAR, FANNIE ANGELOS PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
IN SUPPORT OF SB 526**

Feb. 23, 2021

My name is Maya Dolby and I am a graduate of the University of Baltimore School of Law and a 2016 Scholar of the Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence. It is truly an honor to testify in support of Senate Bill 526.

When I was thirteen years old, my eldest brother was shot six times while away at college in Richmond, Virginia. He was a graduating senior at the time, a star athlete, and an expecting father. My family was traumatized, and we wanted justice for him. Unfortunately, that did not happen. To this day, no one was ever charged with the crime that was committed against my brother. Thankfully, he is still alive and well today. But that is the moment when I developed a passion for the law. Unfortunately, however, I had little knowledge of what becoming a lawyer would actually entail.

At Bowie State University, I discovered the Fannie Angelos Program and was offered the opportunity to receive a full scholarship to law school. Suddenly, my dreams became a reality. The faculty associated with this program recognized my passion towards the law, and helped me transform into a law student capable of becoming the type of attorney I wish my brother had. An attorney with integrity, a true commitment to justice, and impeccable legal skill. The program helps to achieve this by pouring into each student individually.

The Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence operates like a family. This talent search program scours the campuses of Maryland's four HBCUs in search of students that possess the ability to succeed in law school. Each year eight Scholars are selected. Although each student is unique in his/her own way, they each have one quality in common: Grit. The Program scholars are a relentless group. We are students who, despite any challenges in our personal lives, whether it is family issues, health issues or any challenges that may hinder our progress, possess the perseverance and passion required to achieve our long-term goals. We laugh together, we study together, and we uplift and support each other.

I can say without reservation that if it were not for the support of the Program, my law school experience would not have been the same. I graduated with honors and am happy to share that I passed the bar exam the first time taking it and in the midst of a global pandemic. I attribute my success to the support that accompanies selection as a Fannie Angelos scholar. I am confident that as I enter the legal profession, something that I've longed to do most of my life, I will do so knowing that this program has prepared me to be the attorney that my brother needed thirteen years ago. I will continue to "pay it forward" by helping, without hesitation, future classes of Scholars. For this reason, I urge the committee's favorable report of SB 526.

Letter of Support for SB 526 and FAP from Coppin.p

Uploaded by: Gass, Paul

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY OF PAUL GASS
IN SUPPORT OF SB 526**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
MARYLAND STATE SENATE**

Feb. 25, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee. I write this letter in support of Senate Bill 526 which would establish a Legal Education Success Collaborative in the State of Maryland and to advocate for continued and augmented State financial support for the Program. I work with the current incarnation of the Legal Education Success Collaborative known as the Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence.

In my role as counselor to Coppin State University students who are planning to pursue graduate studies, I have served as campus liaison for the Fannie Angelos Program. Through more than ten years working with Professors Mike Higginbotham and Mike Meyerson, founders of the Fannie Angelos program, I have seen the incredible success of the Program and of the Coppin scholars who have benefitted from its rigorous mentoring. The students that I advise face financial barriers to graduate professional programs such as law school. These barriers are often insurmountable, and students are forced to reconsider career plans. The scholarship support offered by the Fannie Angelos Program is exceptionally rare in the field of law and has had a dramatic impact not only on the lives of students but on diversity in the legal profession as well.

More than fifteen Coppin students have benefitted from the support of the Fannie Angelos Program. Seven have completed their J.D. at University of Baltimore; two others completed their studies at the University of Maryland and Georgetown University. Six of those graduates are now members of the Maryland State Bar Association. Five former Coppin students are currently working towards their J.D. at the University of Baltimore.

While the numbers are significant, they do not convey the transformative impact that this program has had on the lives of my students. There are many stories to tell and each is as compelling as the next. But to give just one example, I worked with a student who had left Coppin for a number of years to work. When he returned, he had gained a new seriousness and drive and was committed to earning an MBA. He enrolled in the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) prep workshops that I conduct in The Institute for Standardized Testing at Coppin. When he started to look into programs and prepare applications, he was stopped in his tracks at the realization of the impossibility of paying, or borrowing through student loans, the

tuition for business school. I mentioned that some people use law school, rather than an MBA, as the springboard to a career in business and that there is a program through which he could earn a full-ride scholarship to law school. He committed himself fully to preparing for the LSAT and completing the Fannie Angelos Program. His graduation from University of Baltimore School of Law was an emotional event as he was joined on stage by his proud grandfather who had spent his career as a custodian in the University of Baltimore law school. The impact of the transformation, across just two generations, was felt by everyone in attendance.

There are many more stories I can relate about the students with whom I have worked, and of the deep personal impact on their lives and the consequential changes in their career trajectories due to the opportunities afforded by the Fannie Angelos Program. The people of the State of Maryland will be well served by increasing the commitment of financial support for the Fannie Angelos Program at the University of Baltimore School of Law. I urge the committee's favorable report of SB 526.

Paul Gass
Coordinator, The Institute for Standardized Testing
Honors Program
Philosophy Instructor, Department of Humanities
Coppin State University
346 B Health and Human Services Building
(410) 951-3387
pgass@coppin.edu

SB 526 - Legal Education Success Collaborative - E

Uploaded by: Siri, Michelle

Position: FAV

BILL NO: Senate Bill 526
TITLE: Legal Education Success Collaborative - Established
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
HEARING DATE: February 25, 2021
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Senate Bill 526 creates a Legal Education Success Collaborative between Maryland's two law schools, University of Maryland Carey School of Law and University of Baltimore School of Law, and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) of Maryland. This collaborative would create a pipeline to increase diversity in the legal field through financial support, professional development, and mentoring opportunities.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland wholeheartedly believes the legal profession is best served when it is reflective of our communities' rich and diverse backgrounds. Representation matters, particularly within the judicial system. By working with HBCUs and the law schools to create systems to help eradicate traditional barriers to law school, including economic and social barriers, the collaborative will help the legal community as a whole.

For those reasons, the Women's Law Center of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 526.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, membership organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change. The Women's Law Center operates two legal hotlines, the Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Projects in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Carroll County, the Collateral Legal Assistance for Survivors Project, and the Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence Project.

SB526 Legal Education Success Collaborative - Esta

Uploaded by: Tobin, Dean Donald

Position: FAV

Donald B. Tobin
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Maryland
Francis King Carey School of Law

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 526
Before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 25, 2021**

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee, my name is Donald Tobin, and I am the Dean and a Professor of Law at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. I am pleased to join Senator McCray, and my colleague Ronald Weich in expressing my strong support for SB 526, which creates a Legal Education Success Collaborative between the University of Maryland Carey School of Law, the University of Baltimore School of Law, and the Maryland historically black colleges and universities. Funding for this collaboration will allow us to provide financial assistance to diverse students attending law school, thereby increasing diversity in the legal profession and helping ensure that justice and legal assistance in Maryland is provided by a diverse group of highly trained lawyers.

Both law schools in the state have a history of providing excellent legal education for the next generation of lawyers and leaders. It is critical that these lawyer/leaders be diverse and that a legal education is available for a broad group of people in our state. We at Maryland are proud to be the number one school for African American enrollment for any law school ranked in the top 50, and we congratulate the University of Baltimore on being rated one of the top schools for African Americans by National Jurist magazine. We both work hard to recruit, educate, and train a diverse student body. We are an essential partner in creating a diverse workforce. But we need your help.

The history of diversity and inclusion in law schools is not one that we are proud of. Law schools, like other educational institutions, often denied opportunity to people of color. For the University of Maryland, it took a lawsuit by Thurgood Marshall, and a decision by our Court of Appeals, to open our doors to Donald Gaines Murray and people of color 84 years ago.

We honor Donald Gaines Murray, Thurgood Marshall, and those who fought for integration by educating some of the most influential diverse leaders for the state. We are proud of our diverse lawyer/leader alumni like Elijah Cummings, Stephanie Rawlings Blake, Angela Alsobrooks, and Charles Sydnor, who sits in this body and is a sponsor of the bill. We also boast about superb practitioners like Kenneth Thompson, the monitor of the Baltimore Consent Decree, and James Benjamin, the new Baltimore County Solicitor. Additionally, we are proud of alumni who are dedicated judges and leaders in the State, like Andre Davis and Clayton Greene. At a recent gathering of African American lawyers at the law school organized by our own Professor Larry Gibson, I noticed a room full of distinguished judges, state legislators, and leading lawyers. Our state, and our world, are better because of these lawyer/leaders.

Today, we are asking that you help us succeed in our mission to improve diversity in the legal profession, by supporting Maryland's law schools in encouraging and recruiting diverse students to attend law school. This collaborative supports two existing programs at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law and the University of Baltimore Law School –

Maryland's Diversity and Inclusion Scholars Initiative, and the University of Baltimore's Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence.

In 2017, with the support of several law school partners, Maryland Carey Law created our Diversity and Inclusion Scholars Initiative. Our program currently has eight law-firm and business partners including, DLA Piper; Gallagher, Evelius & Jones; Gordon Feinblatt; Miles & Stockbridge; Pessin Katz; Deloitte, T. Rowe Price, and our newest partner Semmes, Bowen & Semmes. These law firms and businesses provide financial support for our program, but also help mentor and encourage our students. The goal is to provide both a financial and academic environment that allows diverse students to not only succeed, but also to thrive.

The Diversity and Inclusion Scholars Initiative offers financial and professional support to 10-15 academically talented students annually (for a total of 30-45 students at any one time). Diversity Scholars have demonstrated leadership and an ability to overcome challenges. In addition to financial assistance, the students receive mentoring from our partners, attend networking events, participate in activities in the legal community and at the law school, and have access to other skill-building exercises. They also build a strong community within the program to support each other and contribute to each other's success and sense of belonging. This year we successfully moved the program to a virtual format, and created additional opportunities for community building.

The program is designed to both encourage students to enroll at Maryland Carey Law, and to support their success once they arrive. Too often, prospective students' view of lawyers is derived from what they see on TV or read in novels. We want our students to expand their view of what it is to be a lawyer, and to strive to be the next generation of great lawyer/leaders. Our inaugural class which graduated in 2020, is already evidencing inspiring results. For example, Chukwukpee Nzegwu from Silver Spring has made the most of law school. He was on the trial team that won the Battle of the Experts competition at Drexel. He also traveled to Malaysia to present a paper at an environmental law colloquium over the summer. Chukwukpee helped asylum-seekers in our Immigration Clinic and was very active in our Black Law Students Association. He was heavily recruited after law school and is now an associate at Womble Bond Dickinson. Another diversity scholar, Brandon Wharton, who is graduating this year, was editor in chief of the law review and will be clerking first in the United States District Court in Maryland and then for the Fourth Circuit for a judge from Maryland. After his clerkship, he plans to work for Gallagher, one of our firm partners..

And today, you will hear from one of our most recent scholars, Randall Ainsworth. Randall is a diversity scholar and is our first Elijah E. Cummings scholar. He is from Baltimore, attended UMBC, worked here in Annapolis, and was heavily recruited by law schools. We were pleased to be able to recruit him to Maryland through our diversity scholarship program.

Through mentoring, and exposure to different types of law practice, we hope that the Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship Initiative will help our students reach new heights like it has for Chukwukpee and Brandon.

We cannot accomplish this important goal without financial support. We need a pathway whereby diverse students believe that they can succeed academically and financially in law school. The aim is both to increase the pool of diverse students applying to law school, and to encourage the great students to stay and obtain their law degrees here in Maryland.

As a profession, we have been unsuccessful in dramatically increasing our diversity over the last thirty years. We simply must do better, and to do that, we need a coordinated approach. One that helps prepare more students for law school, makes it financially plausible for them to attend, nurtures them to succeed while they are in school, and supports them as they enter the profession. True justice in our society requires that all members of society feel a sense of belonging. That the legal system is not stacked against them, and that justice is not just for a chosen few. A legal profession that looks more like the citizenry it serves is an important component of promoting justice for all. SB 526 helps us achieve that task. Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to provide a favorable report on SB 526.

HB526 testimony Weich.pdf

Uploaded by: Weich, Ronald

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY OF RONALD WEICH
DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE SCHOOL OF LAW**

IN SUPPORT OF SB 526

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
MARYLAND STATE SENATE**

Feb. 25, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee. My name is Ronald Weich, and I serve as dean of the University of Baltimore School of Law. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 526 which would establish a Legal Education Success Collaborative in the State of Maryland.

I am proud to join Senator McCray and my colleague Donald Tobin from the University of Maryland School of Law in this initiative to ensure that all Maryland college students have an equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality legal education, and to strengthen diversity in the legal profession. A large share of the lawyers who practice in Maryland are graduates of one of the state's two law schools. It is vital for public confidence in the administration of justice that our schools educate lawyers drawn from all of Maryland's diverse communities. This bill will help us to meet that challenge.

SB 526 would support the program at the UB School of Law that has already proven to be successful in producing excellent lawyers who reflect the community they serve.

Our school has long sought to identify, mentor and educate promising students from all backgrounds. The current incarnation of our efforts is a program known as the Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence, a unique collaboration between our law school and Maryland's four historically black colleges and universities. The Program prepares Maryland's HBCU students to gain admission to law school and then continues to help them thrive in law school and beyond.

Each year, eight students from Maryland HBCUs are selected to participate in an intensive law school "boot camp" program. Law School faculty and staff provide extensive LSAT preparation, one-on-one academic support, networking opportunities, career counseling and individualized wrap-around services for non-academic issues related to health, finances and family matters. In addition to these eight scholars, a dozen other HBCU students receive free LSAT preparation services. Successful students can earn scholarships to UB Law including the possibility of a full scholarship.

The Program has had a significant impact on the lives of the more than one hundred HBCU students who have gained admission to law school. Graduates from Bowie State University, Morgan State University, Coppin State University and the University of Maryland

Eastern Shore have attended UB with great success. The program is a national model; in 2017, it received the American Bar Association's prestigious Diversity Leadership Award.

The Program is currently named in honor of pioneering UB Law alumna Fannie Angelos and in recognition of a generous donation of seed money from her brother Peter Angelos beginning in 2013 and lasting for five years. Since the end of that five-year period, the law school itself has been able to provide limited funding and our dedicated faculty and staff have volunteered their boundless time and energy. At this time we seek state support to enable us to strengthen the program.

Maryland would not be the first state to recognize that government support for a collaboration between a state's law school and its HBCU's is in the public interest. In 2018, the California legislature appropriated \$4.5 million to allow HBCU students to attend the University of California's Hastings College of Law. Just as that state understood educational equity and diversification of the legal profession to be worthy public goals, so should this body support Maryland students in a like manner. This is an opportunity to reinforce the state's commitment to its HBCUs while also strengthening collaboration among the higher education institutions within the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important topic. I urge the committee's favorable report of SB 526.

SB 526 MHEC Letter of Information 02252021.pdf

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SB 526 Legal Educ Success Collaborative (McCray) E

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Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

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Lieutenant Governor

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Secretary

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Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 526 Legal Education Success Collaborative – Established (McCray, et al)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: February 25, 2021

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs

SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 526 mandates an annual appropriation in the amount of \$450,000 to the Legal Education Success Collaborative, which includes the University of Baltimore School of Law, the University of Maryland School of Law, and the Maryland Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). The Collaborative's mission is to increase diversity in the legal profession through financial support, mentorship, and professional development. Funds are to be distributed as follows: \$200,000 to UB Law; \$200,000 to UofMD Law; and \$50,000 to support a coordinator position at one HBCU selected by the Maryland Higher Education Commission who will promote the scholars program to all HBCU students.

EXPLANATION: The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the increase in the original mandated funding for this program. DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which requires spending allocations for FY 2022 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2020.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19, making revenue predictions for the remainder of FY 2021 and FY 2022 highly volatile. Many individuals and households are unemployed or underemployed, with many industry sectors operating at much less than 100% capacity. Federal stimulus programs are providing much needed relief, but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability.

The General Assembly and Administration have successfully enacted the Governor's emergency Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act (SB 496 RELIEF Act), which provides \$1.2 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is incumbent upon us to allow the impact of this unprecedented relief package on the State's economy to take effect. Further mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of an ongoing pandemic.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at
(410) 260-6371 or barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov**