



Maryland Independent College
and University Association

Written Support

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Senate Bill 626 (Griffith) Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants - Alterations

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February 17, 2022

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 58,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of *Senate Bill 626 (Griffith) Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants - Alterations*. This legislation expands the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) for Physicians and Physician Assistants to include part-time physicians and physician assistants.

Senate Bill 626 authorizes the Maryland Department of Health to establish pro-rated loan repayment amounts for eligible part-time physicians or physician assistants. The addition of this group within MLARP is timely given the current global public health crisis due to COVID-19. The inclusion of part-time work allows more flexibility in an evolving employment structure. This bill will ensure that as many physicians and physician assistants as possible will be able to apply for, and benefit from, MLARP. By increasing financial support for these healthcare professionals, the State is improving access to pursue graduate-level education in the healthcare industry operating at a deficit.

One of the MICUA member institutions, Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU), is dedicated to preparing Physician Assistants through a new and developing Master of Science program. NDMU is in the process of attaining ARC-PA accreditation for the program. Over the past two years, NDMU has witnessed historic retirements and a loss of health care professions because of the current public health emergency and thus identified a need to train a new cohort of physician assistants to meet this demand. As referenced in NDMU's testimony, the university supports the passage of SB 626 to further attract individuals to the health profession and serve the needs of the State.

If you would like further information or have any questions or concerns, please contact Irnande Altema, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtema@micua.org.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 626.