



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 426

University System of Maryland – Board of Regents- Quasi-Endowment Funds

March 30, 2023

Favorable

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 426. The bill authorizes the USM Board of Regents to establish quasi-endowment funds and use investment income produced to provide student financial aid.

A quasi-endowment is an investment established by the governing board with the expectation that the fund be managed to produce spendable income annually that would be used for a specific purpose. Like other types of endowments, the expectation is that the original invested amount be invested and managed to last in perpetuity, with only the income used annually for the specified purpose.

The USM places access and affordability of a higher education as a high priority. Attending USM schools are over 41,000 students eligible to receive Federal Pell Grants. These grants (which do not have to be repaid) are awarded to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need. For 2022-2023, the maximum award that a recipient could receive totaled \$6,895. On average, eligible students receive \$4,400 in Pell Grants. The average direct cost of education (tuition, fees and housing) for 2022-2023 is \$25,808 at UMCP, \$25,984 at UMBC and \$24,460 at Towson

In the fall of 2022 the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP), launched the Terrapin Commitment. This program, the largest single-year new investment in need-based financial aid, will provide up to \$20 million annually for full-time Pell-eligible students from the State of Maryland. While the \$20 million commitment will cover all tuition and fees for thousands of these students, there continues to be a significant remaining unmet need among this group. President Pines' ultimate goal is to meet 100% of unmet need up to direct costs of our low-income Maryland students, thus greatly reducing students' reliance on loans. In addition to better supporting the lowest income students, the intent of the Terrapin Commitment is to address affordability inequities to increase the enrollment of students whose families believe attending UMCP is out of reach financially.

The proposed Senate Bill 426 will allow USM to establish a quasi-endowment of no more than \$150,000,000 from balances held and invested by the State Treasurer. Spendable income, by direction of the Board, will be used to provide scholarships to our students.

Senate Bill 426 would provide a funding stream of over \$6,000,000 to fund scholarships to students.

The System, along with affiliated fund-raising foundations have pooled their endowment funds and invest them in a single portfolio that is managed to last into perpetuity. The spending from the funds is guided by a policy that determines how much can be taken out of the funds. The spending rate is a target of 4.25% of market value each year. The combination of the investment and spending policies are designed to ensure that the fund grows in value each year and is managed to maintain its purchasing power into the future.

The USM urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 426.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of twelve institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards eight out of every ten bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of twenty-one members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

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