



**BILL: Senate Bill 812 – Higher Education – Disciplinary Records – Use in Admissions and Disciplinary Proceedings.**

**FROM: Mrs. Demetra Crawford, Ed.S., President & Founder**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

**DATE: 2/23/2023**

I am writing testimony in support of Senate Bill 812 – Higher Education – Disciplinary Records – Use in Admissions and Disciplinary Proceedings.

The Maryland Fair Access to Education Act of 2017 states that public institutions of higher learning cannot ask applicants about their criminal records. Lawmakers in Maryland approved this legislation acknowledging that it deters many students from accessing education for fear that their prior behavior record disqualifies them from admission. The practice places a barrier to higher education for students attempting to improve their quality of life. Revoking opportunities for students to achieve academic success due to barriers from high school could be considered harsh or unconstitutional depending on individual circumstances.

The Maryland Guideline for State Code of Discipline states “No student comes to school “perfect,” academically or behaviorally, and many face challenges in their homes and communities. All students, however, can succeed and deserve the opportunity to do so. Schools should provide the instruction and support necessary to address students’ academic and behavioral needs.” Understanding that in Maryland more than 70% of discipline issues are highest in the minority populations, the question then becomes, have we (stakeholders,



education professionals,) strategically come up with solutions or opportunities for this targeted group of students or young adults?

As an experienced education professional who has supported students between the ages of 14 and 24 for the past fifteen years, the importance of staff development through experiential learning is crucial for education/school support professionals. Especially those that service marginalized and misrepresented students. With the many pressures and barriers already faced as a student of color, limiting their educational experiences due to behavior issues (generally more allow health and left unsupported), can have lifelong effects. Preparing and developing school resource staff that service students' mental and socioemotional needs allow increased support and opportunities for student behavior improvement.

As of 2020, the Common App, whose application for admission is used by over 900 colleges and universities, as well as three million applicants, teachers, and counselors will no longer require applicants to report whether they've been cited for a disciplinary violation at school on the common portion of the application. This movement is one that has opened doors that were once closed for millions of applicants worldwide and thousands in the state of Maryland. Common Apps President & CEO, Jenny Rickard, opened this announcement to the world by saying: "We want our application to allow students to highlight their full potential. Requiring students to disclose disciplinary actions has a clear and profound adverse impact. Removing this question is the first step in a longer process to make college admissions more equitable. This is about taking a stand against practices that suppress college-going aspiration and overshadow potential." I agree!