



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 574

**State Employee Rights and Protections – Personnel Actions and Harassment –
Complaints
March 3, 2023
Information**

Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 574. The bill authorizes an applicant for state employment or a state employee to file a complaint alleging harassment by an employer within 2 years after the alleged violation that is the basis of the complaint. The bill also increases, from 30 days to 1 year, the period of time for an applicant or employee to file a complaint on the basis of political affiliation. Senate Bill 574 would significantly extend the deadlines for filing harassment and other complaints, making it more difficult for the universities to conduct timely investigations while pertinent facts are still fresh.

The University System of Maryland (USM) policies prohibit discrimination against applicants and employees on the basis of any legally-protected characteristic. The policies prohibit harassment, including acts of violence, on the basis of any legally-protected characteristic, at USM institutions and in connection with USM programs and activities. They also prohibit retaliation against any student, faculty, staff, or applicant for admission or employment who asserts a claim of discrimination under the USM's policies, or someone who participates in an investigation of a complaint of discrimination.

USM employees have several avenues for filing written complaints, including the USM's statutory grievance procedure and institution-based complaint procedures available under federal Title IX protections. The USM's complaint procedures are designed to ensure a thorough investigation can be conducted in a timely manner and resolved, in compliance with all federal and state anti-discrimination laws and regulations.

The USM deeply values its employees and demonstrates its commitment through the promulgation of policies and procedures intended to ensure equal employment opportunities across all aspects of the employment relationship. The USM's policies foster the ideal that the USM's workplace environments are places where all employees feel valued and respected and are places where they can do their best work.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share these comments regarding Senate Bill 574.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 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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