



**House Appropriations Committee
House Bill 678
Public Higher Education – Communities of Interest – Targeted Recruitment and
Outreach Efforts
February 13, 2024
Favorable**

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 678. The University System of Maryland (USM) recommends a favorable report.

Comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional higher education centers, USM institutions award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. 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 three Historically Black Institutions, three additional Minority-Serving Institutions, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

These wide-ranging institutions have unique missions, but consistent with the USM strategic plan, [*Vision 2030: From Excellence to Preeminence*](#), the institutions are committed to achieving equity and justice within the System and to having our students and employees reflect the diversity of the State of Maryland. To this end, the institutions that comprise the USM engage in outreach to various communities of interest across the state.

The specific locations and activities our campuses engage in vary significantly by the type of institution and its location and resources. Some of our institutions do not recruit first-year students, for example, so the way they engage with high schools could be very different from the way that the larger residential universities do. Importantly, institutions may engage in outreach activities to targeted communities that may not be expected to tie immediately to admissions and application data.

For example, the University of Maryland, Center for Environmental Science has done outreach with young elementary school students to make them aware of the environment. This kind of activity is important to build college awareness from very early ages, but it could be years before the application data reflects this effort. And those young people may decide to go to another institution—but the important thing is that they seek higher education.

The USM campuses are happy to describe the good work they do in working in our communities. That said, the bill's reporting requirements will not be without challenges and require resources. Partnership work typically occurs across the campus, and admissions offices may not be aware of all such efforts underway. We ask for some patience as we develop the processes to capture the information sought.



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