



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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February 27, 2024

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Chairman Ben Barnes  
Appropriations Committee  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong favorable support for **House Bill 1244 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements – Requirements**, a bill that requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission to have a designated staff member to define, identify, and compile data related to the workforce needs of the State of Maryland. It will also require the MHEC to establish a Program Review Process Advisory Council. **This bill is on the 2024 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

During the 2022-2023 academic year, several predominantly white institutions (PWIs) in Maryland were found to have duplicated degree programs from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the state. This act of blatant duplication has adversely affected HBCUs regarding admission rates and federal funding. Specifically, Towson University was found to have copied Morgan State University's Business Analytics doctoral program, violating a 2021 legal settlement requiring Maryland to pay \$577 million to the state's HBCUs for allegation underfunding the schools.

More than 100 HBCUs have provided Black students across the United States access to higher education that has been historically denied to them by PWIs. However, HBCUs continue to face barriers in equal funding and program creation. Specifically in Maryland, HBCUs now have to contend with PWIs outright copying programs that are specific to HBCUs.

House Bill 1244 will allow for data on workforce needs to be analyzed and find the appropriate solution to meet those needs. It will also require the Maryland Higher Education Commission to establish an advisory council to determine if degree programs from HBCUs are being duplicated by PWIs and the best course of action. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports **House Bill 1244** and asks that you vote favorably on this bill.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland