

**Senate Bill 81**  
**Yolanda Wilson, President, College of Southern Maryland**  
**Unfavorable Report**

**January 24, 2024**

As president of the College of Southern Maryland, I request an Unfavorable Report for SB 81 – Higher Education – College of Southern Maryland – Budget.

We fully recognize the trust placed in the college by our three Boards of County Commissioners and our Southern Maryland Delegation members when they unanimously endorsed our local budget process in 2020. We also understand the imperative for accountability and transparency and the need for continued collaboration with our counties.

Their endorsement in 2020 of the legislation that unified the college’s budget was a first step. We must now advance this trust, understanding we need to provide fuller reporting that demonstrates greater accountability and transparency to assure the counties that our distributions of their county’s funding are equitably allocated.

SB 81 would return CSM’s budget to the previous system of budgeting, a model that is no longer relevant. The educational landscape has shifted dramatically over the last decades, and how we do business has shifted. In 2000 when we became the College of Southern Maryland, instruction was primarily offered in person; 24 years later and in a post-pandemic world, we offer students a variety of learning modalities and services that necessitate the flexibility of our current budgeting more than ever.

We respectfully ask that the local budget process remain intact. CSM has a unified budget that supports our students and services at all physical and virtual campuses. This budget gives the college the flexibility required to operate effectively and provides a funding formula that remains equitable over time.

The prior budget model resulted in a duplication of services and funding limits that prevented the expansion of programs and services when needed due to a lack of funding. Having one budget allows us to allocate precious dollars where needed to best support our students. Furthermore, one operational budget supports the reality that our students have choices and no longer stay at their “home” campus. They commute among campuses, which means county funding already supports students from across the region.

The broad impact in reversing our budget process would be limiting resources which in turn would restrict student access to programs, their momentum to succeed, and their mobility to get better paying jobs. Limited resources would lead to increased funding requests to support duplicative programs and services for those locations and counties.

I respectfully request the committee's unfavorable report of SB81. Thank you.

Yolanda S. Wilson  
President, College of Southern Maryland