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**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Bill 678
Public Higher Education – Communities of Interest – Targeted Recruitment and
Outreach Efforts
March 20, 2024
Favorable**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan 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.



Contact:

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HB678WrittenTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Delegate Kevin M. Harris

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB678
Public Higher Education - Communities of Interest - Targeted Recruitment and Outreach Efforts
Delegate Kevin M. Harris
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

HB 678 seeks to ensure that Maryland public higher education institutions are committed to diversity and inclusion by mandating institutions have a written policy encouraging targeted recruitment and outreach efforts to underrepresented groups. By defining “communities of interest,” this bill, ensures increased enrollment at institutions with a historic underrepresentation of these communities in their enrollment, encompassing underrepresented groups, demographics, and/ or geographic areas.

Targeted recruitment and outreach efforts are defined as activities such as college fairs, partnerships with community-based organizations, student ambassador programs, college access workshops, and/or dedicated support services for students when crafting and submitting college applications. With these efforts *and* the mandated reports to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, Maryland higher education institutions will create opportunities for underrepresented communities of interest to access and thrive in higher education.

According to the Institution Data Dashboard for the University System of Maryland, 3,140 students attended the University of Maryland, College Park from Prince George’s County. Overall, nearly 15% of Marylanders live in Prince George’s County yet less than 10% of these students are represented by University of Maryland’s flagship institution of the University System of Maryland. With targeted recruitment and outreach efforts mandated by the state, Marylanders can expect their university to resemble the state in which they live.

The University System of Maryland and Towson University have begun to make a difference in enrollment and retention of underrepresented groups. Towson’s program called “Towson for Baltimore” has seen a 100% retention rate for students participating in the program.

Morgan State University’s own recruitment and outreach efforts have created a diverse student body. Their efforts have been successful in creating a campus environment where greater than 50% of their students are Pell-grant eligible or first-generation.

Similar programs and initiatives have been successful in recruiting first-generation students to Maryland’s largest provider of postsecondary education, the University of Maryland, Global Campus. Due to outreach programs at UMGC, 66% of their students are first-generation and 18% speak English as a second language. UMGC is also highly diversified in the types of students who are continuing education after working a full-time career. According to their most recent statistic,

78% of students work 40 or more hours per week. In addition, greater than a third of UMGC's student body is made up of students with dependent children. UMGC is also the #1 college for conferring cybersecurity degrees to women. UMGC is an excellent example of a Maryland institution that has successfully achieved a diverse student body while continuing to offer a high-quality degree program. With HB 678, Marylanders can expect a similar commitment to diversity and inclusion in all the state's higher education institutions.

To this end, institutions with diverse faculty, staff, and students not only enrich an individual's college experience but also serve our communities by preparing their students to become culturally competent and empowered leaders. Maryland has the opportunity to be a leader in the nation, guaranteeing that all its students have access to a high-quality college education.

To ensure our students are the best prepared to address and thrive in diverse communities, workforces and global economy, I urge a favorable report on HB 678.

Respectfully,

Kevin M. Harris

Delegate Kevin M. Harris

Legislative District 27A – MD

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UMBC

Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Public Higher Education - Communities of Interest - Targeted Recruitment and Outreach Efforts
Wednesday March 20, 2024
Letter of Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 678.

UMBC is a dynamic public research university integrating teaching, research and service to benefit the citizens of Maryland. As an Honors University, the campus offers academically talented students a strong undergraduate liberal arts foundation that prepares them for graduate and professional study, entry into the workforce, and community service and leadership. UMBC has over 14,000 students, in both undergraduate and graduate programs, representing Marylanders throughout the state.

House Bill 678 codifies the already existing vision of UMBC and the State – that public Higher Education “should be committed to promoting diversity and inclusion at each institution by attracting and graduating a diverse student body committed to service”. The bill will require Universities to have targeted recruitment and outreach efforts for Communities of Interest, and report on those efforts and related data.

For UMBC, inclusive excellence is a cornerstone of our work, and is showcased in the demographic of our students and graduates. Our demographics include a student body that looks like Maryland, including over 20% African-American, 19% Asian-American, almost 8% Hispanic, and 28% Caucasian. As a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), UMBC is one of the top 50 most ethnically diverse colleges, according to Best College Reviews. Our students bring to UMBC a diverse range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, which serve as the foundation of our culture of inclusive excellence. Unlike most other institutions, UMBC reports no achievement gap among populations of students. We are the nation’s #1 producer of Black undergraduates who go on to complete a Ph.D. in the natural sciences or engineering and #1 for Black undergraduates who complete an M.D./Ph.D.

UMBC is in support of this legislation because it is critical to the core of our mission of inclusive excellence. While we have much to be proud of, more work needs to be done to make certain all Universities are targeted recruitment efforts throughout every corner of this State, with every demographic group. This legislation provides a path to accountability in this crucial issue, and UMBC embraces the opportunity.

We urge a Favorable Report on House Bill 678