



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

House Bill 611

**Institutions of Higher Education – Mandatory Disclosures for New and Prospective Students
(Informed Enrollment Act)**

February 11, 2025

Letter of Information

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 611. The bill requires each institution of higher education to publicize College Scorecard information on its website and in certain publications, as well as to share this information with current and prospective students in several prescribed ways.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is composed of twelve distinguished institutions and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the state. Each of USM's 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, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

This bill largely aligns with practices of our institutions and their efforts to make prospective and current students aware of what their institutions offer in the way of programs, what their programs cost, what kind of outcomes students can expect, and what typical student debt is for those leaving the institution. Institutions take seriously the obligation to ensure that students and their families understand this information prior to enrollment. Currently, the College Scorecard of the US Department of Education aggregates in the Scorecard information the institutions provide through collections to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), as well as data it has through the Department's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).

So long as the College Scorecard remains as it is in its current form, institutions should be able to comply with the proposed legislation in time, but the July 1, 2025, implementation date is potentially challenging both logistically and financially with respect to updating all "related recruitment materials." The bill calls for not only publicizing a link but also an explanation of what is at the link, which might require the redesign and reprinting of certain materials, which can be costly.

While the bill anticipates the possibility of data not being available through the Department of Education, it does not account for the possibility that the Department could change the Scorecard so that its content might no longer be aligned with the goals of the proposed legislation.

The bill has requirements for when and how information will be shared. The USM institutions share this information routinely, but how, when, and where they share it may vary from one group of people to another in order to tailor the message to the moment.

Should the Department of Education no longer provide the College Scorecard in its current form, it will add a burden to institutions to identify debt outcomes as institutions and the State do not have access to all the information of the NSLDS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

