



March 5, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony of Victoria Leonard, Chair, Committee for Montgomery on
HB 1462: Higher Education - Anti Hate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus
Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)**

Position: FAVORABLE

Thank you Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 1462. My name is Victoria Leonard, and I am the 2024/25 Chair of the Committee for Montgomery. The Committee for Montgomery (CfM) is a cross-section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, arts, and community-based organizations. Our mission is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the State.

CfM strongly supports House Bill 1462. This bill is an essential step toward creating a more inclusive, respectful, and safe environment on college campuses across Maryland. By mandating that institutions implement policies aimed at preventing hate and discrimination, HB 1462 fosters a culture of respect, equality, and inclusion for all students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, the bill's focus on setting clear guidelines for expressive conduct ensures that all individuals on campus have the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue while maintaining a respectful and productive campus environment.

The requirement for institutions of higher education to conduct meetings that discuss these issues further emphasizes the importance of continued education and awareness in combating hate and discrimination. These efforts are critical in shaping a campus culture that values diversity and the free exchange of ideas while protecting individuals from harmful or discriminatory actions.

CfM believes that HB 1462 will contribute significantly to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive academic environment across Maryland's higher education institutions. We urge a favorable report on HB 1462.

Sincerely,

Victoria Leonard,
2024/25 Committee for Montgomery Chair