

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and respected members of the Appropriations Committee, including my delegate, the lovely Delegate McCaskill of District 44B. For the record my name is Charlotte Broderick, and I am here today in my capacity as one of the Co-Directors of Student Advocacy with the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, to ask a for a favorable report on House Bill 912.

My work with UMBC's SGA revolves predominantly around ensuring an equitable and supportive environment for all students at the university, and in my case specifically, those students with disabilities. I took on this position in August of last year and from the very beginning students have reported to me, as I'm sure they have reported for many years, noncompliance of certain instructors when it comes to administering accommodations for students as stipulated by their 504 plans. While avenues for recourse are in place at the university, no student should be denied their accommodations, point blank period. House Bill 912 ensures that instructors at institutions of higher education in Maryland are properly trained regarding institutional obligations outlined by federal laws like the Rehabilitation and Americans with Disabilities Acts. With this training, higher education instructors will be educated about the essential nature of accommodations for students with disabilities, hopefully eliminating any further instances of noncompliance.

I myself am very fortunate to have been provided the resources and support in life that allowed me to be approved for accommodations at UMBC, which I would like to emphasize are luxuries that are not available to all students with disabilities. Even then it was a struggle to get these accommodations in the first place, even with several recommendations from licensed professionals, I was still faced with questions like "are you sure you need these?" and "are you sure you don't want these just because classes are getting harder?" from administration at my high school. Students who go through the often arduous process of getting these accommodations, should be provided every assurance that they will not be withheld or improperly administered by an instructor. No student should feel that their success is restricted by the very individuals that are supposed to ensure it. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 912.