

Favorable HB0912: Institutions of Higher Education – Instructor Training – Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Date: March 5th, 2025

From: Shawn Abraham

13303 Big Cedar Lane, Bowie MD, 20720

Shawna2@umbc.edu

To: House Appropriations Committee

My name is Shawn Abraham, and I am asking you to support HB0912. This is a bill that will require colleges to train their instructors in their responsibilities in carrying out the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In the fall of 2023, I was set to graduate from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County with my degree in political science. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

One of the final required classes I was taking to graduate was an introductory physics course. The class had a demanding weekly pace of 3 to 5 assignments, three lectures, 1 lab, and an online quiz that could only be accessed during a precise 20-minute window. This content was highly visual. As a blind student, it took me much longer and more effort to complete assignments. Add to this the fact that I seriously injured my right hand at the beginning of the semester, and it meant that I quickly fell behind.

Since I took AP physics 1 and 2 in high school, I knew that with the proper accommodations it was completely possible for me to excel in this class. But when I notified the professor of my issues, she was not willing to accommodate. I struggled to receive extra time on quizzes, alternative assignments, and accessible exams. When I did receive any of these things, through the support of Student Disability Services, they were barely given. I spent these

three months mostly studying physics with the assistance of friends and catching up on assignments, many of which were ultimately not even graded. I lived in a state of anxiety, constantly emailing disability services and my professor.

I received an F in this class. I was not able to graduate in December 2023 as I had planned, and instead I graduated in May 2024.

Most professors that I encounter have good intentions. They would like to accommodate disabled students, but may not necessarily know how. Other professors are more unwilling, and could use an explanation of their legal obligations. This bill would ensure that professors are properly trained, and that disabled students have the opportunity to obtain an equal college education. Thank you for your consideration, and please vote in favor of HB0912.