



SB151 Higher Education - Disciplinary Records - Use in Admissions and Disciplinary Proceedings

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EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT

Our names are Julien Halleman, Noah Gordon, Olivia Chin, and Dhru Nahan, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in support of SB151 Higher Education - Disciplinary Records - Use in Admissions and Disciplinary Proceedings. If passed, this bill would prohibit institutions of higher education from inquiring about a student's disciplinary records, except for purposes of inquiring about a student's academic integrity, in admissions applications unless they explicitly do not use such information to disqualify applicants.

The practice of using applicants' disciplinary records has long served as an unfair barrier to university admission, particularly disadvantaged minorities and marginalized groups who tend to receive harsher punishments in school. Due to stereotypes and systemic inequalities, minorities often face more severe consequences for behavior than their classmates. Colleges disqualifying them on account of this unequal treatment exacerbates the negative effects of unjust actions taken against them. This bill would help mitigate those impacts.

Discipline and fairness within school punishments cannot be standardized effectively - different schools have varying policies, teachers, and levels of leniency. As a result, some students are punished for actions that others in different schools with different teachers wouldn't face consequences for.

Students should not be burdened by the "skeletons" of their past forever. Removing this barrier will allow the college admissions process to become more meritocratic and protect students' privacy, rather than focusing on past mistakes. This reform will encourage students who have made errors to improve their behavior with the hope of pursuing higher education, rather than being held back by their past.

Ultimately, academics should be the primary consideration for college admissions. If a student shows academic potential and has grown from their mistakes, why should they be denied a spot in college? Under this bill, colleges retain the ability to inquire about academic integrity violations, meaning the focus will shift from what students do outside the classroom, often influenced by inequitable factors, to how they approach the academic environment - a much more accurate indicator of college readiness.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* Uplifting marginalized student voices in all educational settings; (Plank 10, Clause B)
- *CRASC Supports...* Initiatives that encourage students that reward utilization of their educational opportunities; (Plank 3, Clause J)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB151.

Respectfully Submitted,

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