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03/03/2025

The Honorable Members of the Seante Committee

Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 435 (SB0435) with Amendments - Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools - Title VI Coordinators (Remove Discrimination in Education Act)**

Hearing Date: March 05, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud Immigrant, parent, Community advocate and resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I am here today to express my strong **support** for Senate Bill 435, the Remove Discrimination in Education Act. This bill is a necessary step toward ensuring equity, accountability, and safety in Maryland's educational institutions.

Discrimination in schools and higher education institutions continues to be a pressing issue, disproportionately impacting students of color and other marginalized communities. SB0435 seeks to address this by requiring each educational institution and local school system to designate a Title VI Coordinator—an individual responsible for enforcing federal civil rights protections under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**Why This Bill Matters:**

**Improves Oversight & Accountability** – Having a dedicated Title VI Coordinator ensures that discrimination complaints are handled properly, promptly, and fairly. This will increase transparency and prevent cases from being ignored or mishandled.

**Creates Safer Learning Environments** – A clear anti-discrimination framework means students, parents, and educators have a trusted resource to turn to when facing or witnessing discrimination. This will foster a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

**Strengthens Compliance with Federal Law** – While Title VI is a federal requirement, many schools lack a structured approach to enforcing it. By mandating these positions, SB0435 ensures better compliance with civil rights laws across Maryland's education system.

**Proposed Amendment for Stronger Impact:**

While this bill is an essential step forward, I encourage an amendment requiring annual training for Title VI Coordinators to ensure they remain informed on best practices, legal updates, and effective implementation strategies. This will maximize the effectiveness of their role and strengthen the bill's impact.

By passing SB0435, Maryland will take a proactive stance against discrimination in schools, ensuring that every student—regardless of race, color, or national origin—has access to a safe, supportive, and fair educational experience. I strongly urge this committee to vote in favor of SB0435 and help create a more just and inclusive Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Wambui