



TESTIMONY FOR SB0847
Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization
to Protect University Students Act

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0847 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The prevalence of racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation in academic environments is appalling. The safety and inclusivity of these institutions is compromised as a result. SB0847 aims to combat these issues by mandating comprehensive antihate and antidiscrimination policies, ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff can thrive in a secure and respectful environment.

SB0847 requires institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce antihate and antidiscrimination policies, including training for faculty and staff on responding to hate incidents. It establishes a Campus Community Grant Program to fund intergroup and interfaith outreach initiatives and creates a Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of violence and harassment. Additionally, the bill mandates annual meetings between senior administrators and approved student organizations to discuss these policies and requires institutions to submit detailed reports on incidents of violence and harassment.

For Marylanders, SB0847 offers significant benefits by fostering safer and more inclusive higher education environments. It promotes equity and respect across campuses, ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and protected. By addressing hate and discrimination proactively, the bill strengthens Maryland's commitment to diversity and inclusion, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and equitable society.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition wholeheartedly supports this bill and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.