



**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Senate Bill 597**  
**Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership**  
**March 11, 2026**  
**Information**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on Senate Bill 597. The bill establishes the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership to coordinate statewide collaboration in artificial intelligence research, workforce development, and innovation.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

The vision outlined in Senate Bill 597 aligns deeply with our mission and vision regarding AI. The USM strongly supports the collaborative architecture the bill imagines – a partnership in which state institutions of higher education collectively build capabilities, leverage shared expertise, and create a pipeline of AI-enabled talent for Maryland's economy. At the same time, to achieve the full promise of the legislation, adequate funding will be essential. There is no appropriation included in Senate Bill 597, yet the bill assigns responsibilities that will require new personnel, technology infrastructure, operational capacity, and sustained coordination across campuses. Without state investment, the partnership's goals cannot be met at the scale or pace the bill envisions.

Collectively, the University System of Maryland's institutions and regional higher education centers provide unmatched geographic and socio-economic reach across the State of Maryland. From Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, and from urban centers to rural communities, USM institutions serve learners at every stage of life and career. This reach is further extended through the regional higher education centers in Southern Maryland, Shady Grove, and Hagerstown, which expand access to high-quality academic programs, applied research activity, and workforce-aligned education in partnership with local employers and communities. Across all campuses and centers, USM institutions integrate teaching, research, and workforce development to meet regional needs while contributing to statewide economic growth, innovation, and social mobility. A few examples of some of the programs currently in place include:

UMBC offers a clear illustration of the opportunity – and the need. UMBC is a premier Central Maryland AI and tech hub, anchored by the [Center for Artificial Intelligence \(CAI\)](#), established in 2024 to unite 50+ faculty across AI, robotics, and machine learning. The university leverages bwtech@UMBC (a 500k+ sq ft research park) and partners with the Baltimore Region Tech Hub to drive innovation in predictive health, cybersecurity, and data science. UMBC anticipates that supporting the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership’s pilot activities across three regions of the state would require approximately \$400,000 in institutional investment. This includes increased full-time staff, cloud computing resources, travel, and access devices necessary to operate the hubs and engage community partners. An additional \$100,000 would be needed to support partner USM institutions in Western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore so that the pilots can operate effectively statewide. These investments represent the foundational infrastructure required to make the partnership functional in practice, enabling regional hubs to serve as engines of workforce development, innovation, and applied research.

The University of Maryland, College Park, the State’s flagship research institution, is advancing interdisciplinary leadership in artificial intelligence through the [Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland \(AIM\)](#). AIM serves as a campus-wide hub that brings together faculty and students across all twelve colleges to advance AI research, education, and engagement, with a strong emphasis on the responsible and ethical development and use of AI for the public good. Through AIM, students across all majors gain exposure to core AI principles and their application in diverse fields, while faculty collaborate on foundational and applied research spanning areas such as machine learning, robotics, human-centered AI, and societal impacts. AIM positions the University of Maryland, College Park as a critical contributor to statewide and national efforts in AI innovation, workforce preparation, and responsible technology leadership.

The USM anticipates similar categories of need – particularly staffing, technology infrastructure, and operational support. The scale will differ by campus, but the fundamental resource requirements will be consistent. Several campuses already have significant activity and leadership in this space, demonstrating both readiness and momentum.

Towson University, for example, has become a national leader in CyberAI education, integrating artificial intelligence into cybersecurity curricula and securing AI systems to ensure they remain safe and trustworthy. Towson led the development of the first-ever guidelines for the National Security Agency’s [CyberAI Center of Academic Excellence](#) designation – work that now informs AI integration across more than 450 NSA-designated institutions nationwide. The university has also created the AI Institute, which includes an AI Clinic poised to serve as an incubation laboratory for local small businesses, community organizations, and schools seeking to adopt AI solutions responsibly. Towson stands ready to collaborate, but it too notes that meaningful participation in the partnership outlined in Senate Bill 597 will require resources.

Maryland is strongly positioned to lead the nation in artificial intelligence research, innovation, and workforce development. Senate Bill 597 reflects that ambition by outlining a solid framework for cross-sector inter-institutional collaboration. To fully realize its potential, however, the state must pair this structure with the resources needed for meaningful implementation.

Thank you for allowing the USM to provide these comments regarding Senate Bill 597.

