



**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Senate Bill 316**

**Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools - Title VI Coordinators**

**February 18, 2026**

**Information**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 316. The bill requires institutions of higher education, including those comprising the University System of Maryland (USM), to designate a coordinator to ensure compliance with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The USM comprises twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional higher education centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of the 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 and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is widely regarded as landmark legislation that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Title VI of the Act specifically protects individuals from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

In some cases, Title VI complaints are managed by the Title IX coordinator. At other institutions, these responsibilities fall to roles such as the assistant vice president for equity and civil rights, fair practices officers, assistant vice president for student success, or, when employees are involved, the chief human resources officer. Staff in these positions often also provide strategic leadership on compliance with all categories covered by institutional discrimination and harassment policies and procedures.

USM is concerned with language in the bill that would require the governing board of each institution of higher education to "designate a Title VI Coordinator." This responsibility should rest with each individual campus, not the governing board, which in our case is the Board of Regents.

Our institutions already have clear, standardized processes for handling Title VI complaints. These procedures are guided by non-discrimination policies and related protocols. Complaints can be submitted through staff contacts (via phone or a central email address), online reporting forms, or hotlines. Anonymous complaints are accepted, though they are more difficult to investigate. When the complainant is known, staff conduct an intake meeting to gather all relevant information for assessment. The concern is then evaluated to determine whether, if true, the alleged behavior constitutes discrimination. If so, the matter is investigated under applicable policies and procedures, and a determination and resolution follow.

Complaints involving non-students are handled similarly, by multiple offices – such as the president’s office, student affairs, human resources, and equity/civil rights – across campuses, and is shared in policies, during orientation, and often annually via email to the entire campus community. While there are no federal training requirements, USM institutions provide – and in some cases mandate – Title VI or non-discrimination training for various campus groups.

This critical Title VI work is already occurring at our institutions. The System hopes this bill does not require creating a new, specifically named Title VI coordinator, as doing so would be challenging given the current budget constraints.

Thank you for allowing USM to share this information as the Committee considers Senate Bill 316.

