

SENATE BILL 524

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5lr1237

By: **Senators Charles, Muse, Ellis, and Ready**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Religious Educational Institutions – Certificate of Approval**

3 FOR the purpose of exempting certain religious educational institutions accredited by
4 certain accrediting bodies from the requirement to obtain a certificate of approval
5 from the Maryland Higher Education Commission to operate in the State; and
6 generally relating to religious educational institutions and a certificate of approval.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

8 Article – Education

9 Section 10–101(a) and (c)

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

13 Article – Education

14 Section 11–202.1(b)

15 Annotated Code of Maryland

16 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Education**

20 10–101.

21 (a) In this division the following words have the meanings indicated.

22 (c) “Commission” means the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

23 11–202.1.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) (1) Subject to the requirements imposed by this section, and except as
2 prohibited in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a religious educational institution may
3 operate without a certificate of approval from the Commission and may enroll Maryland
4 students in a fully online distance education program in the State without a registration
5 from the Commission if the institution:

6 (i) Is established for religious educational purposes;

7 (ii) Provides educational programs only for religious vocations or
8 purposes;

9 (iii) Offers only sectarian instruction designed for and aimed at
10 individuals who hold or seek to learn the particular religious faiths or beliefs taught by the
11 institution; and

12 (iv) States on the certificate or diploma the religious nature of the
13 award.

14 (2) **(I) THIS PARAGRAPH DOES NOT APPLY TO A RELIGIOUS**
15 **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION THAT WAS ESTABLISHED BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2013.**

16 **(II)** A religious educational institution that is accredited by an
17 accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education may not operate
18 without a certificate of approval from the Commission.

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
20 1, 2025.