

Written Support

House Committee on Ways and Means

House Bill 1585: Economic Development - Maryland E-Nnovation Initiative Program - Extension and AlterationsSara C. Fidler, President
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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for ***House Bill 1585: Economic Development - Maryland E-Nnovation Initiative Program - Extension and Alterations***. This program provides a State match to private funds raised in support of research endowments in scientific and technical fields at Maryland's higher education institutions. Since its launch in fiscal 2016, the program has supported newly endowed department chairs, staff, and support personnel; funded research fellowships for graduate and undergraduate students; and paid for lab equipment and research infrastructure. Through the E-Nnovation Initiative, participating campuses have been able to leverage millions of dollars in private donations to support these research efforts.

MICUA supports the provisions of this bill, which we believe will strengthen the Maryland E-Nnovation Initiative Program even further. It extends the funding for this program from fiscal 2022 through 2026 and increases the minimum program funding level to at least \$12.5 million annually during these years. The bill also specifies that endowment proceeds earned through the program may be used to help fund start-up packages for research faculty, and it clarifies the work obligations of faculty who hold endowed positions supported by the program.

MICUA appreciates our ongoing partnership with the Maryland Department of Commerce and its administration of the Maryland E-Nnovation Initiative Program. Several MICUA member institutions have participated in and benefited from this program over the past five years. Of the 11 institutions of higher education in Maryland currently receiving E-Nnovation funds, six are MICUA members: Hood College, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University Maryland, Maryland Institute College of Art, Mount St. Mary's University, and Washington College. The E-Nnovation Initiative has directly supported these campuses in their ongoing efforts to attract world-class faculty and engage in groundbreaking research and discoveries in a broad range of disciplines, including geographic information systems, public health, computational science, project management, and neurosurgery.

For all of these reasons, MICUA urges a favorable Committee report for House Bill 1585.