

The Frostburg State University Student Government Association
Testimony for SB895
Maryland General Assembly, Tuesday, March 9th, 2021
POSITION: FAVORABLE

My name is Max Hancock and I am a senator in the Student Government at Frostburg State University. I'd first like to thank Chair Pinsky and the committee as a whole for the opportunity to discuss this bill. It is my utmost honor to testify here today, as my constituents and I consider the passage of Senate Bill 895 key for creating transparency and good will across the University System of Maryland's various campuses.

The process by which USM student fees are determined is one complimented by the continuous oversight of the students¹. Whether mandatory or program-specific, University System of Maryland policy dictates that diverse advisory boards be made privy to the financial decisions of the school. This policy theoretically establishes a universal mission of transparency, but that mission isn't actively pursued.

Frostburg State University suffers from the same lack of transparency that inspired students at College Park to create Senate Bill 895. While College Park identified an instance of misspent departmental fees, I want to share my thoughts on a different provision of this bill. Frostburg doesn't have the luxury of student participation in the fees process. System policy mandates a review board that includes students in the fee review process. Allow me to describe my search for this hypothetical review board at Frostburg. First, I asked our director of student activities, who suggested that I reach out to the Vice President of Student Affairs. The Vice President didn't have any information. However, he thought that the board was generally composed of the Student Government executives, so I should ask them. I did so, and got a nice email back from Vice President Thayer saying she didn't know of any such board, but would ask Leon Wyden about it. Vice President of Finance Wyden, despite being perhaps the highest authority on the matter of student fees, is an unknown entity to students, and without systematic change, it seems he will remain that way.

This is not the transparent process Maryland students were promised. Frostburg saw a nearly 20% increase in fees from 2016 to 2019². Students were not consulted directly for this, a travesty for a school that prides itself on being accessible to all. FSU is a low-income community, and we can't endure many more attacks to the well-being of our most vulnerable students.

Senate Bill 895 represents an opportunity to enforce the standards of respect and financial sustainability that recent years have seen neglected. Without this bill's protection, students have no reason to trust the process that demands they surrender their money for unspecified purposes. It is the first step in building a more sustainable future for colleges and the students who sponsor them. Thus, the student body of Frostburg State requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 895, for the good of our education and community.

Sincerely,
Max Hancock
He/Him/His
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¹ VIII-2.50[11846].pdf

² [Data can be found here](#)