



Maryland Independent College  
and University Association

**Opposition**

**House Judiciary Committee**

***House Bill 336 (Ivey) Private Institutions of Higher Education – Police Departments –  
Repeal and Prohibition***

**Sara C. Fidler, President**

[sfidler@micua.org](mailto:sfidler@micua.org)

**February 12, 2021**

On behalf of the private nonprofit member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to ***House Bill 336 (Ivey) Private Institutions of Higher Education – Police Departments – Repeal and Prohibition***. This bill would explicitly prohibit our schools from establishing a police department or granting an employee the powers granted to a peace and police officer, notwithstanding the fact that our schools would need to pass a law to have this authority anyhow. While we understand that issues of social and racial justice have brought corresponding issues of regulating police departments to the fore nationally and in Maryland, for the reasons described below, this legislation is unrelated to those goals.

**First, this bill puts the cart before the horse in that all but one of our institutions do not have the authority to establish a police department under current law.** In order to establish a police department on any higher education campus in Maryland, that campus would need to petition the Legislature for the authority. Therefore, this prohibition is largely symbolic, seems punitive, and is clearly unnecessary.

**Second, this bill singles out private nonprofit institutions from the rest of the institutions within the higher education sector.** The higher education sector in Maryland is a national model for its cooperative structure among all segments of higher education. The prohibition under the bill does not include public four-year institutions or the community colleges. We have longstanding strong and cooperative partnerships with the other segments of higher education, and we spend significant amounts of time jointly determining what is best for the students of Maryland. We advocate before the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education together, we apply for grant funding together, we confer and strategize together regarding testing and vaccine procurement during the pandemic, and we facilitate transfer pathways. **Our students are Maryland's students.** Therefore, it is both inappropriate and nonsensical to treat us differently when it comes to determining how best to protect our campus communities.

In conclusion, since current law requires affirmative authority for any higher education institution in Maryland to establish a police department, and because we believe that the private nonprofit institutions should be treated the same as public institutions in this regard, we urge you to oppose this bill.

***For all of these reasons, MICUA requests an unfavorable report for House Bill 336.***