

February 25th, 2021

HB 1030–Maryland Higher Education Commission – Procedures – Alterations – FAVORABLE

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps by expanding both the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for school-aged young people. MOST is one of the fifty statewide networks supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and serves as Maryland’s affiliate to the National Afterschool Association. MOST has a strong focus on College and Career Readiness – offering a comprehensive toolkit and training for afterschool and summer program providers.

The provisions outlined in House Bill 1030 represent clear steps towards making the Maryland Higher Education Commission a more transparent, fair, and equitable organization. By using digital tools that have become so commonplace in other institutions across the state government, the commission can develop greater public trust and a sense of accountability. Furthermore, the notion of providing students with clear feedback regarding the status of their scholarship is not merely an act of courtesy, but also an important contribution to families’ decision-making processes.

In 2022, it seems only natural to take advantage of the relevant communications functions that the internet has to offer. Video streaming demonstrates just one of the many ways that technology can aid democratic processes by providing private citizens and media personnel greater latitude can carry out their intrinsic watchdog functions. Additionally, the proposal to log meetings for posterity would the MHEC to be a more effective learning institution— one that is more aware of its procedural bottlenecks and idiosyncrasies.

This is to say nothing of the Delegate Howard P Rawlings Educational Award, which has long recognized the academic achievements of students that demonstrate both educational excellence and financial need. With respect to House Bill 1030, the proposed alterations would further improve the transparency of the MHEC’s scholarship program by making the nature of their financial award clear to applicants. Though seemingly minor, these changes stand to improve the commission’s legitimacy in the eyes of the public. As an organization with demonstrable commitments to expanding career and college readiness initiatives across the state, MOST Network strongly expresses its support for the bill under consideration and urges the committee provide a favorable report.

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