

NANCY J. KING
Legislative District 39
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair
Education, Business and
Administration Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 120
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3686 · 410-841-3686
800-492-7122 Ext. 3686
Fax 301-858-3670 · 410-841-3670
Nancy.King@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 332 – Higher Education – St. Mary’s College of Maryland –
Cost-of-Living Adjustment**

March 22, 2022

Madame Chair and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

In 2017 the Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 434 which altered the funding formula for St. Mary’s College. At that time, it was acknowledged that St. Mary’s had challenges in keeping up with the escalating costs of both benefits and raises for state employees. These expenses were both significant drivers of expense growth. The St. Mary’s funding formula was adjusted to provide for full funding of benefits and 50% funding for cost-of-living adjustments (COLA’s).

Although it was not stated in the law, it was the thinking at the time that the 50% funding of COLA’s by the state would be supplemented by 50% from St. Mary’s College. This has not always been the case and the funding formula is in danger of becoming the ceiling instead of the floor. For example, in FY 2020, state employees received a 3% COLA beginning in July of 2019. St. Mary’s College argued for a 1.5% increase at the bargaining table for state employees at the college. Eventually, a 2% increase was agreed on; however, it was delayed by 3 months resulting in less than a full 2% increase that fiscal year, when other state employees received a 3% increase.

Continuing with this funding formula perpetuates an inequity among our state employees. Senate Bill 332 will alter the funding formula and require the state to fund 100% of cost-of-living adjustments at St. Mary’s College. This change will ensure that employees at St. Mary’s College receive the same percentage increase in COLAs as their counterparts in other public higher education institutions.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 332.