

Senate Bill 136
Rodney Redmond
Unfavorable Report
February 9, 2022

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 136—College of Southern Maryland—Charles County Campus Transition to Charles County Community College. Having worked in the community college sector of higher education for over 25 years, I know from experience that the College of Southern Maryland is a nationally recognized education partner with many organizations, including several other community colleges, 4-year institutions and private partners within the State of Maryland. The College of Southern Maryland provides exceptional opportunities in learning and employment opportunities for the citizens of the Southern Maryland region.

Senate Bill 136, in my opinion and experience, does not provide opportunities in the best interest of the citizen of Charles county or the Southern Maryland region. First, the bill reduces access to learning and employment enhancement opportunities for citizens in the region. By dismantling the College of Southern Maryland, the citizens of the region would have less access to higher education at a reasonable cost, including the cost of travel and lodging. There would simply be fewer programs to provide the same or more learning and employment opportunities as the College of Southern Maryland does currently. The current programs belong to the College of Southern Maryland. The cost associate with replicating each of the various programs for students would create an added tax burden on the county and its citizens (all three counties in fact), making it cost prohibitive. Second, the bill would require replication of all the administrative services already in place, which is an additional cost to be either passed on to the students in tuition and fees, pricing college attendance out of their range, and passed on to the citizens of the county and the region, increasing the tax burden on the citizens. The current establishment allows for these resources to be shared at scale for all College of Southern Maryland goes, without added out-of-pocket costs or tax burden.

Then, there is the replication of the need for accreditation. The College of Southern Maryland is currently accredited as one institution by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. This single accreditation allows the college to receive federal funds such as Pell grant funds which are awarded to our students to help reduce and in some cases eliminate their out-of-pocket costs. Through accreditation, the College is also eligible for other federal funds and grants that help reduce cost for students and reduce the cost of building programs that support student learning. As a direct result of accreditation, our students are able to transfer to other colleges and universities to continue their educational pursuits. The new college would not be accredited for a few years; thus, the students who enroll will have higher out-of-pocket costs and would not be able to transfer their credits to other colleges or universities.

Additionally, there are facilities at the College of Southern Maryland which belong to the College of Southern Maryland. Facilities are not easily transferred by legislation or the stroke of a pen. Many of these facilities are regional facilities that serve students across the region, regardless of home county. Having to purchase, rebuild, or repurpose facilities would be an added burden on the leadership of the proposed new college, the tax payers and the students. Where would the students take classes in the meantime? How would they have access to the top technological advances they now have, while

awaiting the development and establishment of the new college? This all sounds confusing to me, an educator of 25+ years. I fail to see how adding more confusion and uncertainty into the lives of our students benefits them. I fail to see how reducing learning and employment opportunities for our students and citizens of the region benefits them. I fail to see how increasing the cost for education all while eliminating the opportunities to expand that education are beneficial to the county, the region or their citizens.

I ask that the members of the Senate Committee for Education, Health and Environmental Affairs give this bill an unfavorable report.