

Senate Bill 136
Dorothea Smith, CSM Trustee Emeritus
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. The College of Southern Maryland is a nationally-recognized regional community college that creates opportunities for all students in the Southern Maryland region.

I do not believe SB 136 is in the best interest of the students or taxpayers in Southern Maryland. Dismantling the College of Southern Maryland would decrease access to students, create unnecessary and costly duplication of administrative services and educational programs, and add to the tax burden of all three counties.

The existing facilities belong to the College of Southern Maryland, as do the educational programs. All existing employees currently work for the College of Southern Maryland. These are not things that can be transferred to a different college by legislative action.

Accreditation through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which allows for receipt of federal funds including federal financial aid and transfer of credit, is for the College of Southern Maryland.

A separate college in Charles County would have to secure facilities, hire employees, and receive authorization to operate through the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which is a multi-year process. Students in a separate college would not be eligible for federal financial aid until it is accredited, nor could the separate college receive the more than \$1M in National Science Foundation funds for STEM scholarships that are currently available through the College of Southern Maryland.

There are economies of scale in administrative and academic services that come from a regional college that would be lost. The extra costs to taxpayers and counties would be significant, and students wanting programs offered outside the boundaries of their “home” college would have to pay out-of-county tuition, which is substantially higher. None of this is in the best interest of students, taxpayers, or the region.

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

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