



Maryland Independent College
and University Association

Written Support

Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 154 (Beidle and Augustine) Public Health – Mental Health Advance Directives – Awareness and Statewide

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On behalf of Maryland’s independent colleges and universities and the 56,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of [Senate Bill 154 – Public Health – Mental Health Advance Directives – Awareness and Statewide](#). The bill requires academic institutions to assist with the public awareness campaign to encourage and support outreach efforts to inform present or future recipients of mental health services and members of their families about mental health advance directives.

Colleges and universities are increasingly prioritizing mental health services and programs on their campuses as the demand grows for students and faculty. The coronavirus pandemic shifted the scales for many students and university employees who experienced changes, economic hardship, emotional imbalances, and a myriad of other mental health needs. Many students are showing signs of increased anxiety and depression as they struggle to navigate a college experience starkly different from what they had envisioned or understood. Faculty are teaching in environments without a roadmap and adjusting to new workplace dynamics and requirements. MICUA member institutions offer a wide array of services to support and promote student mental health, emotional growth, and well-being through our wellness and health centers. SB 154 creates another mechanism to provide individuals with pathways to obtain additional mental health resources and information using existing platforms.

We appreciate the effort that the sponsors intend for university students and others in the campus community to access mental health advance directives. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Irnande Altema, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtema@micua.org.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 154.