



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB678**  
**Public Higher Education - Communities of Interest - Targeted Recruitment and Outreach Efforts**  
**Delegate Kevin M. Harris**  
**Wednesday, March 20, 2024**

HB 678 seeks to ensure that Maryland public higher education institutions are committed to diversity and inclusion by mandating institutions have a written policy encouraging targeted recruitment and outreach efforts to underrepresented groups. By defining “communities of interest,” this bill, ensures increased enrollment at institutions with a historic underrepresentation of these communities in their enrollment, encompassing underrepresented groups, demographics, and/ or geographic areas.

Targeted recruitment and outreach efforts are defined as activities such as college fairs, partnerships with community-based organizations, student ambassador programs, college access workshops, and/or dedicated support services for students when crafting and submitting college applications. With these efforts *and* the mandated reports to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, Maryland higher education institutions will create opportunities for underrepresented communities of interest to access and thrive in higher education.

According to the Institution Data Dashboard for the University System of Maryland, 3,140 students attended the University of Maryland, College Park from Prince George’s County. Overall, nearly 15% of Marylanders live in Prince George’s County yet less than 10% of these students are represented by University of Maryland’s flagship institution of the University System of Maryland. With targeted recruitment and outreach efforts mandated by the state, Marylanders can expect their university to resemble the state in which they live.

The University System of Maryland and Towson University have begun to make a difference in enrollment and retention of underrepresented groups. Towson’s program called “Towson for Baltimore” has seen a 100% retention rate for students participating in the program.

Morgan State University’s own recruitment and outreach efforts have created a diverse student body. Their efforts have been successful in creating a campus environment where greater than 50% of their students are Pell-grant eligible or first-generation.

Similar programs and initiatives have been successful in recruiting first-generation students to Maryland’s largest provider of postsecondary education, the University of Maryland, Global Campus. Due to outreach programs at UMGC, 66% of their students are first-generation and 18% speak English as a second language. UMGC is also highly diversified in the types of students who are continuing education after working a full-time career. According to their most recent statistic,

78% of students work 40 or more hours per week. In addition, greater than a third of UMGC's student body is made up of students with dependent children. UMGC is also the #1 college for conferring cybersecurity degrees to women. UMGC is an excellent example of a Maryland institution that has successfully achieved a diverse student body while continuing to offer a high-quality degree program. With HB 678, Marylanders can expect a similar commitment to diversity and inclusion in all the state's higher education institutions.

To this end, institutions with diverse faculty, staff, and students not only enrich an individual's college experience but also serve our communities by preparing their students to become culturally competent and empowered leaders. Maryland has the opportunity to be a leader in the nation, guaranteeing that all its students have access to a high-quality college education.

To ensure our students are the best prepared to address and thrive in diverse communities, workforces and global economy, I urge a favorable report on HB 678.

Respectfully,

*Kevin M. Harris*

Delegate Kevin M. Harris

Legislative District 27A – MD