



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 20, 2019

Testimony in Favor of SB 719
University System of Maryland - Board of Regents - Transparency and Oversight

Chairman Pinsky and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

I respectfully request your support of Senate Bill 719 with amendments. This bill would implement a wide array of reforms to the Board of Regents, in both their appointment and governing process, in order to make the Board more transparent and accountable to the people of Maryland.

This past summer, the tragic death of Jordan McNair led to the unfortunate decision of the Board of Regents to place athletics above academics. The Board did, however, recognize their mistake, apologize for it, and take actions to correct it. But more needs to be done to minimize such errors in the future and to strengthen the confidence taxpayers, students, parents, and employers have in the board and our higher education system at large.

SB 719 does the following to accomplish this accountability and transparency:

To increase diversity and expertise on the Board:

- Adds the Secretary of Commerce to better integrate workforce development needs into how we train a large section of Maryland's workforce.
- Requires the Governor to appoint at least one member with a background in higher education administration, finance and diversity and workforce inclusion.
- Adds a second student regent and increases their terms to two years in a staggered fashion, one year nonvoting and the other year voting. This follows the successful model used in the California systems and will give students more time to become oriented to their role and train under an experienced student member.

To increase stability, cooperation and accountability, the bill:

- Adds one member each chosen by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate;
- Requires the Governor to submit his or her nominees for confirmation to the Senate together and during the legislative session;
- Requires Senate confirmation of the Board's nominee for Chair (an individual who is the leader of a \$5.8 billion public institution).

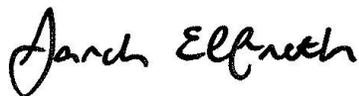
Working with student leaders at the University of Maryland, College Park, and other concerned citizens, we've also included a number of measures to increase public input and transparency:

- Requires the Board to accept public testimony and to livestream and archive its six public meetings a year.
- Requires the Board to publish the motions and vote totals of both public meetings and executive sessions — including votes on firing university presidents and chancellors — in publicly available minutes.

Two of the most important principles in good government are transparency and accountability, and this bill ensures that those two principles are incorporated into the Board of Regents. Once again I ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 719.

I have included two amendments with this testimony: one to add Senator Rosapepe as primary sponsor and the other to ensure confidentiality in the hiring process of new university presidents and chancellors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sarah Elfreth