

TESTIMONY

House Environment and Transportation Committee

HB 1400 – Seed Community Development Anchor Institution Fund

Tina Bjarekull, President

March 8, 2016

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 63,000 students they serve, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of *House Bill 1400, Seed Community Development Anchor Institution Fund*. If enacted, this bill will significantly leverage public and private investments in blighted areas near Maryland's institutions of higher education.

HB 1400 establishes a Seed Community Development Anchor Institution Fund within the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide grants and loans to anchor institutions for community development projects in blighted areas of the State. To be eligible for a grant or loan an anchor institution must provide evidence of matching funds from a private source. This provision increases the viability of projects by ensuring that community development projects undertaken by the fund have the support of both the public and private sectors.

MICUA institutions partner with local government, community advocates, and the private sector on community development projects and routinely engage in projects to build stronger neighborhoods, attract residents, create jobs, and support economic growth. In June of 2014, eight higher education and medical institutions, including four MICUA member institutions, joined the Mayor of Baltimore City in announcing the Baltimore City Anchor Plan (BCAP), which is a strategic partnership to foster economic growth and development in Baltimore City. As part of that plan, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University Maryland, Maryland Institute College of Art, and Notre Dame of Maryland University, agreed to partner with the City to address four priority areas: 1) public safety, 2) local hiring, 3) local purchasing, and 4) quality of life issues. All four institutions have identified priority action items to achieve these stated goals and to build on their long-standing work in various regions of the City, including the Bolton Hill and Mount Royal neighborhoods, the Station North Arts and Entertainment District, the Homewood Community, and the York Road Corridor.

Each MICUA member is an anchor institution within the local community and has close ties to the private sector, the non-profit sector, as well as community stakeholders and advocates. HB 1400 will allow additional investments in the State's most blighted areas to help revitalize communities, stimulate economic growth, and create jobs. These efforts strengthen neighborhoods and foster better relationships between anchor institutions and the local community.

For these reasons, MICUA urges a favorable report for HB 1400