



Oppose

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

House Bill 15 (Morgan) Public Information Act – Public Records – Nonprofit Organizations

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the more than 56,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to [*House Bill 15 \(Morgan\) Public Information Act - Public Records - Nonprofit Organizations*](#).

HB 15 seeks to expand the definition of a "public record" under the Public Information Act to include certain documentary material made by nonprofit organizations that receive \$50,000 or more annually from State grants, State bond proceeds, or local impact grants. While we understand the intent behind this legislation, we are concerned about the unintended consequences it may have on our member institutions.

As private, nonprofit institutions of higher education, MICUA institutions are already subject to significant oversight by various State agencies, including the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Legislative Services, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Board of Public Works, and the budget committees in the General Assembly. This existing oversight ensures that our institutions are transparent and accountable for their use of State funds.

However, HB 15 could potentially expose confidential academic records, as well as proprietary information that would be detrimental to students and innovation. Our institutions have a responsibility to protect the sensitive information of our students, faculty, and staff, and this bill could compromise that responsibility.

Furthermore, MICUA institutions have a centuries-long partnership with the State of Maryland and an exemplary record of fiscal stewardship. We are proud of our contributions to the State's economy, workforce, and civic life. This bill could undermine the trust and cooperation that have characterized our relationship with the State for so long.

We understand the importance of transparency and accountability in the use of State funds. However, we believe that there are more effective and targeted ways to achieve these goals without compromising the confidentiality and proprietary information of our institutions.

We would be happy to work with the Committee to explore alternative solutions that balance the need for transparency with the need to protect sensitive information. Thank you for considering our testimony.