



## Senate Bill 66

*Labor and Employment – Hiring – Education Requirements*  
*(Give Me A Chance – Job Opportunities Act of 2022)*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Finance Committee

Date: January 27, 2022

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 66. This bill would impose unrealistic and unenforceable restrictions on how counties hire professional staff.

**SB 66 could prohibit counties from seeking the best and most-qualified candidates to execute the work of local government by prohibiting employers from asking standard questions of education in their job applications and during the job interview process.**

Counties screen job applicants prior to interviews, considering if the position requires an advanced degree or training, and ask for that information prior to moving forward in the hiring process. In other positions, job descriptions list a degree or equivalent years of experience, which again is part of the screening process prior to the interview. This legislation would prohibit employers from discussing college or a higher education degree until an “initial offer of employment” has been made, potentially wasting time and resources of both the employer and candidate at that late stage of the process.

Many county employment positions appropriately require licensure and advanced education to ensure the safety of the public in the carrying out of that position’s responsibilities – for example, county engineers and environmental health officers. The vague language of SB 66 does not make it clear whether or not counties could require education and licensure as a requirement of filling these critical roles.

Public sector employers are already subject to a wide range of transparency measures in hiring and employment practices – far beyond those applying to other employers. The language in SB 66 referring to an exemption of this prohibition “if a minimum educational requirement is necessary to obtain an occupational license required for the position and issued under the business occupations and professions article or the health occupations article” is extremely vague and unenforceable. Additionally, if applied to the public sector, counties fear this law could eliminate promotion opportunities which allow local government employees a career path forward based on continued educational success.

Furthermore, jurisdictions already have the option to prioritize other factors outside of educational achievement in their hiring processes, and several already do so. Counties should continue to have the flexibility to make employment and hiring decisions that best suit their needs as public service providers.

Unfortunately, SB 66 could ultimately compromise the ability of counties to hire skilled and qualified staff to deliver the necessary services to the Marylanders they serve. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 66 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.