

March 7, 2024

Governor Glenn Youngkin
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin,

My name is Jenna Robinson, president of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization committed to excellence in higher education.

Our organization advocates responsible governance, viewpoint diversity, academic quality, and cost-effective education solutions. I am writing to bring to your attention our concerns regarding Senate Bill 506, which, if enacted, would shift the accountability framework for oversight of Virginia's 39 public institutions of higher education.

After a thorough analysis of SB 506, we are concerned that the proposed legislation may undermine the crucial balance of accountability by mandating that higher education trustees primarily answer to their respective universities' presidents and administrators. We understand the importance of effective governance and appreciate the complexities associated with overseeing these institutions but we believe that the primary duty of Virginia's boards of visitors should be to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

While we acknowledge the need for independent university governance, it is equally imperative that Virginia's public universities remain accountable to Virginia's citizens and their elected representatives. Altering this relationship could potentially compromise the transparency and responsiveness of these institutions to the broader public interest.

Accountability to citizens and taxpayers is essential in public higher education governance. We hope you will carefully consider the potential ramifications of SB 506.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue and for your service to the people of Virginia.

Sincerely,



Jenna A. Robinson
President