Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch:

We are faculty members and deans at the University of Maryland School of Law. We write to voice our opposition to, and deep concern about, budget amendments that condition appropriations to the University System of Maryland and the University of Maryland, Baltimore on the School of Law submitting a report that describes, among other things, the names of represented clients and financial expenditures for each case in which our Environmental Law Clinic has participated in a court action over the past two years.

The University of Maryland School of Law is a national leader in clinical legal education and public service. Indeed, our clinical program consistently is ranked in the top ten among all law schools in the country. This national reputation exists because of the essential role our clinics play in advancing the public service mission of our law school. Each year approximately 250 students, under faculty supervision, provide over 110,000 hours of free legal services to Maryland citizens. Our clinics represent a wide range of under-served clients throughout the State of Maryland, from the Eastern Shore to Baltimore and all other points. We train our students to be ethical practitioners and leaders who are duty-bound to uphold the sanctity of the law. Our law school has long trained individuals who have served the State of Maryland in various capacities, including as leaders in the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Indeed, our law school has had the great honor and pleasure of educating many members of the General Assembly. We are proud that our law school, through our clinical and non-clinical courses, has long been among our nation’s very best in teaching students the complex mix of analytical, practical and professionalism skills that the legal profession demands.

We strive to teach our students that the rule of law is paramount in the United States; that, indeed, the U.S. legal system is one that other countries look to with envy. From the first day of their law school careers, our students learn that legal disputes often have to be resolved in courts of law, where parties are provided the opportunity to have their disputes heard and decided by objective judges and juries free from outside influence.
As a result, we are particularly concerned that the impetus for these amendments is a lawsuit filed by our Environmental Law Clinic. These amendments unduly interfere with both our teaching mission and the professional responsibility of our students and faculty. The State of Maryland is justly proud of its world-class public universities. But this intrusion into our system of legal education and our judicial system in general is inconsistent with the fundamental values our great state. We urge the Members of the General Assembly to quickly and decisively remove the intrusive language from the budget bills.

Respectfully submitted,

José Bahamonde-González          Taunya Lovell Banks
Barbara Bezdek                   Richard Boldt
Brenda Bratton Blom              Patricia Campbell
Danielle Citron                  Dawna Cobb
Douglas Colbert                  Robert Condlin
Karen Czapanskiy                 Kathleen Dachille
Peter Danchin                    Abraham Dash
Martha Ertman                    Larry Gibson
Donald Gifford                   Barbara Gontrom
Mark Graber                      Michael Greenberger
Susan Hankin                     Michelle Harner
Deborah Hellman                  Diane Hoffmann
Alan Hornstein                   Renée Hutchins
Sherrilyn Ifill                  Teresa LaMaster
Susan Leviton                    Russell McClain
Leslie Meltzer Henry             Michael Millemann
Paula Monopoli                   Dana Morris
Robert Percival                  Michael Pinard
Peter Quint                      Shruti Rana
William Reynolds                 Robert Rhee
Jana Singer                      Maxwell Stearns
Rena Steinzor                    Robert Suggs
Michael Van Alstine              Katherine Vaughns
Ellen Weber                      Deborah Weimer
Marley Weiss                     Roger Wolf
Gordon Young

cc: Members of the Maryland General Assembly
Clifford M. Kendall, Chair, Board of Regents, University System of Maryland
William E. Kirwan, Chancellor, University System of Maryland
Dr. E. Albert Reece, Acting President, University of Maryland, Baltimore and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine