



**COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY**  
COURT HOUSE, TOWSON, MARYLAND 21204

DAVID MARKS  
COUNCILMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT  
COUNCIL5@BALTIMORECOUNTYMD.GOV

COUNCIL OFFICE: 410-887-3384  
FAX: 410-887-5791

January 14, 2016

Mr. Kurt Anderson, President  
Ms. Kristin Zdon, Director of Community Outreach  
Student Government Association  
Towson University  
8000 York Road  
Towson, MD 21252-0001

Dear President Anderson and Director Zdon:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposed social host legislation.

As I have said many times, I am proud to represent Towson University. Baltimore County is stronger because of the presence of this world-class institution, a center for academics, sports, and culture.

During my five years on the Baltimore County Council, I have actively supported Towson University. Our office sponsored legislation that assisted with the location of Towson University operations at Towson City Center. We secured funding to plan the circulator that will help students move throughout Greater Towson, and we formed a task force to address public safety along Burke Avenue when two students were assaulted in 2013.

I appreciate the regular communications I have with the office of Towson University's President, as well as my annual talk before the Student Government Association. During my recent visit, I thanked the SGA for its professionalism and its leadership role. I also said that a majority of students are good neighbors, and I still believe that.

Unfortunately, despite the improvements you mentioned in your letter, there are still incidents that disrupt established neighborhoods near Towson University. Most recently, these incidents included the release of fireworks in Towson Manor Village in the early morning that was heard as far away as Goucher Boulevard, and parties in Knollwood-Donnybrook and Towson Manor Village that attracted dozens of students. My colleagues on

the County Council were shocked when they saw the video footage of dozens of students exiting a recent party on Maryland Avenue.

The social host legislation is fair, and in several respects:

First, the legislation gives a police officer the discretion as to whether or not to write a citation. There is no requirement. As with many situations, those involved in a reported disturbance will have the opportunity to interact with a police officer who may or may not issue a citation.

Second, once someone is cited and found guilty, it is a civil—not a criminal—offense. No one wants to endanger a student's ability to find employment after graduation.

Third, the steeper fines come into play only with repeated problems at the same property.

Fourth, renters who are not students will face the same penalties as those who are enrolled in college.

Fifth, as far as the legislation unfairly targeting Towson neighborhoods and Towson University, the statistics prove this is an area with multiple problems. It is an appropriate cluster of neighborhoods for a two-year pilot program.

Sixth, the legislation mirrors Baltimore City's legislation that has resulted in a sharp decrease in unruly incidents in neighborhoods. Presumably, Towson University students who live in the city are familiar with this type of policy.

In short, a student who is behaving in a neighborly manner—as most do—will never face legal or economic repercussions. Thank you again for contacting me, and thank you for the ongoing good work you do on behalf of Towson University.

Cordially:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Marks", written in a cursive style.

David Marks  
Baltimore County Councilman

cc: The Honorable Vicki Almond, Chair of the Baltimore County Council.  
The Honorable Kevin Kamenetz, Baltimore County Executive  
Dr. Timothy Chandler, Interim President of Towson University