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Office of the President

**Senate Finance Committee
SB 419. Labor & Employment – Grant Program for Workforce Skills Assessments**

**Testimony Submitted by Dr. James S. Klauber, President
Hagerstown Community College**

Position: SUPPORT

I am grateful that you would allow me to submit testimony both in writing and in person today. One of the most challenging aspects of workforce development is working with employers to help them identify the right skills for the jobs they have, and then match those skills to the right applicant so that a long term match can be made. Employers seek applicants who have not only the technical skills, but basic and soft skills as well in hiring new employees. Evidentiary data shows that if you can match skills to ability, everyone benefits through a sustained employment relationship, improved safety ratings, and a decrease in turnover.

In Washington County, we have worked with area employers to implement the ACT WorkKeys product. In our Adult Basic Education program we have been successful in aligning abilities to employer needs. We are beginning work with those coming out of opioid treatment to assess their career readiness and place them in jobs where they will be successful.

Currently, Hagerstown Community College is working with our sister colleges in Garrett and Allegany to expand the work that they are doing in this area. The College of Southern Maryland is also interested in pursuing these assessments within their noncredit and adult education divisions. The ability to assist Marylanders, many of who are difficult to place, into entry level careers through a nationally recognized foundational workforce certification is compelling. Passage of this bill will enable businesses to apply for grants to work with Maryland's community colleges for implementation in their counties.

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