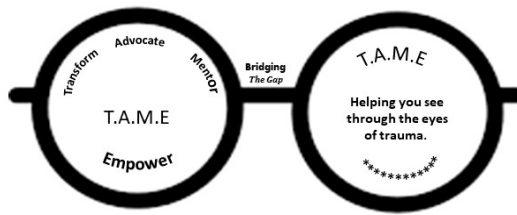


TAME on SB 0551.pdf

Uploaded by: Adrian Muldrow

Position: FAV



T.A.M.E supports SB0551 Volunteerism is good but paying a person / proving a stipend for service gives the passion for service more purpose.

T.A.M.E
Transformative Advocacy Mentoring Empower
www.tame1.org

SB 551_ Education - Service Year Option Program -

Uploaded by: Alexa Thomas

Position: FAV



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 551

TITLE: Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

DATE: February 22, 2023

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 551.

Senate Bill 551 would establish a Service Year Option Program for eligible Maryland high school graduates. The program, set to be administered by the Department of Service and Civic Innovation, would extend the opportunity to recent graduates to work for a variety of community organizations, public programs, and private entities in Maryland. This program ensures that participants receive an appropriate salary, as well as other tangible benefits from collaboration with on-site supervisors such as college and career counseling, workforce training, and financial literacy education.

PSSAM applauds the Governor's initiative in introducing a state-wide Service Year Option Program for Maryland graduates. As Maryland's top educational leaders, superintendents often witness the profound impact experiential learning opportunities can have on students. Service year programs have been shown to have a positive impact on students and produce a wide range of beneficial outcomes, including improved academic performance in higher education, increased civic engagement, and improved job prospects. Through the establishment of a Service Year Option Program in Maryland, young adults will have the opportunity to develop important career and life skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership qualities.

PSSAM is eager to support such a program with the potential to benefit the symbiotic relationship between Maryland students and communities. Through the opportunity to engage in service work, recent graduates would be able to make a positive impact in their communities, explore college and career opportunities, and contribute to the greater good. PSSAM believes that this program would help to build stronger, more vibrant communities throughout Maryland.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 551 and urges a favorable committee report.

SB551 FAV JOTF Testimony - Service Year.JOTF.pdf

Uploaded by: Debra Carr

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 551:
Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through
Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)**

TO: Chair Brian J. Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

FROM: Debra Carr, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: Tuesday, February 21, 2023

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF strongly supports Senate Bill 0551 as a means of expanding occupational opportunities to high-school graduates through meaningful service opportunities that provide a living wage, career mentorship, and financial literacy.**

The Vocational Exploration Act will enable graduating high-school students, or those who have recently earned a GED, to explore career opportunities through experiential learning and by developing relationships with and learning directly from those who work directly in high-impact fields. These experiences have a multitude of benefits: they allow students to apply classroom knowledge in a professional setting, to develop their transferable skills, to build confidence, and to refine their career goals. Instead of being tracked directly into low-wage jobs in order to make ends meet, or into higher education programs that students may not know much about or may not be enthusiastic about, Senate Bill 551 would provide students an alternative that would help them in exploring occupational pathways.

JOTF especially supports the Vocational Exploration Act provision that employers pay participants a living wage of \$15 an hour. According to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, almost 40% of internships are unpaid, which is a significant barrier for low-income students. These internships benefit those who can rely on generational wealth and other financial safety nets, and perpetuate an equity gap: 75% of unpaid interns and 62% of all interns in 2020-21 were white, and the majority were men. The \$15 minimum wage requirement in Senate Bill 551 will enable students who have not traditionally been included in these types of

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

career exploratory opportunities, to have a chance to participate, and to reap the benefits of these programs.

JOTF also supports the bill provisions that participants be provided with career counseling and training in financial literacy skills. Financial literacy is critical in helping individuals gain financial independence, saving for emergencies, managing retirement, running a business, filing taxes, and more. Studies show that financial literacy improves the chances that individuals will use predatory financial services such as payday loans, minimizes debt, improves workforce readiness, and trains students in critical skills that are transferable to multiple fields of employment. Additionally, financial education and access to financial services lessens the racial wealth and wage gaps.

Too many Marylanders are struggling to secure full-time employment and to build economic security. With the growing demand for highly-skilled workers in the labor force - internships, apprenticeships, and alternative career exploration programs are a way to train and steer qualified individuals towards these positions. Promoting the careers of these Marylanders is an investment in not only their futures, but also the State's economy. For these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

For more information, contact:

Ioana Stoica / Policy Advocate / ioana@jotf.org / 240-643-0059

SB0551 - SUP - GR23.pdf

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV



SB 551 – Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Date: February 22, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Bankers Association (MBA) **SUPPORTS** SB 551 which establishes the Service Year Option Program in Maryland administered through the newly established Department of Civic and Service Innovation. The Program would create a paid year of service option for high school graduates as an alternative to college and would equip participants with professional development, mentoring, and job training during their service placement.

While working in a service placement, participants in the Program would partner with an on-site mentor to receive specialized assistance and skill development, specifically including financial literacy training. MBA and its members deeply understand the critical importance of financial literacy skills and have long viewed this as a key priority. It is more important than ever that young Marylanders understand that creating and maintaining a banking relationship and history of good credit is essential to their futures.

MBA appreciates the inclusion of financial literacy in SB 551 and accordingly, MBA urges a **FAVORABLE** report on the bill.

The Maryland Bankers Association (MBA) represents FDIC-insured community, regional, and national banks, employing more than 30,000 Marylanders and holding more than \$181 billion in deposits in over 1,000 branches across our State. The Maryland banking industry serves about 4 million customers across the State and provides an array of financial services including residential mortgage lending, business banking, estates and trust services, consumer banking, and more.

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0551.pdf

Uploaded by: Elisabeth Sachs

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: SB 551

TITLE: Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

SPONSOR: The President (By Request – Administration)

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 22, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 551 – Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023). This legislation would establish the Service Year Option program to support graduates interested in the public service field.

The COVID pandemic highlighted the need for critical investments to be made to cultivate a strong and efficient public service field. States and local jurisdictions across the country are suffering from a dwindling pool of applicants who are trained for critical high-impact service placements. Enhanced workforce development tools that provide targeted, specialized training as alternatives to postsecondary education are vital for strengthening the pipeline of talent into State and Local government positions.

SB 551 provides the State, local governments, and participating businesses a strong tool to develop a trained, professional workforce. This bill would establish a program that allows employers to provide individuals who have a high school level education with mentorships and workforce training opportunities, prioritizing the fields of climate, education, and health. The program would also give participants access to an extensive professional network and state resources for employment.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 551. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

SB551_Year of Service_KennedyKrieger_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FAV



DATE: February 22, 2023 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy and Environment
BILL NO: Senate Bill 551
BILL TITLE: Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 551 - Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023).

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 551 would establish the service year option for 200 program participants in the first year, growing to 2000 by the fourth year of operation. Participants would be paid \$15 an hour and be paired with a mentor and growth opportunities.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients nationally and internationally. Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, CORE Foundations a Developmental Disabilities Administration Licensed Agency, HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for a national conference and on-going events.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefits all.

Rationale:

Young adults with developmental disabilities depend on workforce training programs to support their professional growth as they enter the labor force. Many unpaid programs currently exist, including Project SEARCH – a 10-month, unpaid transition to work program – and various work-based learning experiences targeted to students in their final years of school. Opportunities for paid employment and training would further support the transition to the labor force for young adults with developmental disabilities. Paid training experiences benefit both young adults and employers, allowing for young adults to access career paths earlier in life, and enabling employers to appropriately value the contributions of those with developmental disabilities. Enabling these paid training opportunities would also expand the workforce in Maryland and provide a long-term economic benefit to the state.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

Written testimony from Maryland Governor

Uploaded by: Governor Wes Moore

Position: FAV



WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND
21401-1925

February 22, 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 551, the SERVE ACT.

I've said before, and I believe deeply, that with all the challenges our state and nation are facing, it is service that will save us. From the first day of my administration, I have worked to make Maryland a state of service. My second executive order established the Department of Service and Civic Innovation with the goal of bringing together offices and programs that support service opportunities under one umbrella. And I know this goal of elevating service is a goal that the legislature shares, as you and your colleagues across the street did extraordinary work building the framework for a sister program to the service year, the Maryland Corps program. The SERVE Act would advance our shared goal of elevating service, establishing an opportunity for young people from across the state to engage in a year of service after high school.

In my inaugural address and the State of the State, I shared with you what service has meant to me. It has transformed me, strengthened me, tested me, and broadened my perspectives. My journey started with military school then expanded to serving in the armed forces, and running nonprofits focused on supporting underserved students and fighting poverty. And now the Service Year Option Program established by this bill will provide young people of every background in every jurisdiction the opportunity to serve our State and gain real-world skills and experience.

The service year serves as a bridge to a participant's next steps in employment or education, whether it be a new career, public service, technical training, an apprenticeship, postsecondary education, or another service program. Not only does the service year provide the participant valuable work experience, expanding our commitment to the Service Year Program can bring people together in these divisive times and increase civic engagement and participation. For the many young Marylanders who complete high school but may not know what to do next, this

program will give them access to real-world experience, to mentoring, and to career development.

Senate Bill 551 sets up a framework for the Service Year Option Program that will be implemented by the Secretary of the Department of Service and Civic Innovation. Students who have received a high school diploma, certificate of completion, or equivalent level of education within the last two years are eligible to participate at the discretion of the Secretary. Participants will be paid, they will partner with a mentor, and they will participate in opportunities for personal growth beyond their work. At the successful completion of a service year, participants will also be awarded a \$3,000 stipend. The intent is to be expansive with employers partnering with us in the Program, so we are looking for both public and private sector parties to engage with us. The end goal is to create a network of service year opportunities throughout the State while also building up and working with our existing service opportunities and apprenticeship programs.

We have an opportunity with this bill to continue our shared work to elevate service. To make Maryland a state of service. To engage thousands of Marylanders in the work of building a stronger state. I look forward to working alongside you in this effort.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

2023-02-22 SB 551 (Support).pdf

Uploaded by: Hannibal Kemerer

Position: FAV

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General



CANDACE MCLAREN LANHAM
Chief of Staff

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FACSIMILE NO.
(410) 576-7036

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.
(410) 576-6584

February 22, 2023

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB551 Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023) (Support)

The Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 551, Governor Moore's Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023. Senate Bill 551 creates a service year option for Maryland high school graduates. Participants will receive career exploration and mentoring support while serving their communities through partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Senate Bill 551's flexibility allows for programs that appeal to a wide variety of young people with an expansive range of career interests. The resulting program will serve as a springboard for participants to enter post-service year employment, higher education, or apprenticeships while cultivating a culture of service in communities across the State.

For all the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

cc: Committee Members

This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the Senate and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or sbrantley@oag.state.md.us.

SB551 FAV JOTF Testimony - Service Year.pdf

Uploaded by: Ioana Stoica

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 551:
Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through
Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)**

TO: Chair Brian J. Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

DATE: Tuesday, February 21, 2023

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF strongly supports Senate Bill 0551 as a means of expanding occupational opportunities to high-school graduates through meaningful service opportunities that provide a living wage, career mentorship, and financial literacy.**

The Vocational Exploration Act will enable graduating high-school students, or those who have recently earned a GED, to explore career opportunities through experiential learning and by developing relationships with and learning directly from those who work directly in high-impact fields. These experiences have a multitude of benefits: they allow students to apply classroom knowledge in a professional setting, to develop their transferable skills, to build confidence, and to refine their career goals. Instead of being tracked directly into low-wage jobs in order to make ends meet, or into higher education programs that students may not know much about or may not be enthusiastic about, Senate Bill 551 would provide students an alternative that would help them in exploring occupational pathways.

JOTF especially supports the Vocational Exploration Act provision that employers pay participants a living wage of \$15 an hour. According to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, almost 40% of internships are unpaid, which is a significant barrier for low-income students. These internships benefit those who can rely on generational wealth and other financial safety nets, and perpetuate an equity gap: 75% of unpaid interns and 62% of all interns in 2020-21 were white, and the majority were men. The \$15 minimum wage requirement in Senate Bill 551 will enable students who have not traditionally been included in these types of career exploratory opportunities, to have a chance to participate, and to reap the benefits of these programs.

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

JOTF also supports the bill provisions that participants be provided with career counseling and training in financial literacy skills. Financial literacy is critical in helping individuals gain financial independence, saving for emergencies, managing retirement, running a business, filing taxes, and more. Studies show that financial literacy improves the chances that individuals will use predatory financial services such as payday loans, minimizes debt, improves workforce readiness, and trains students in critical skills that are transferable to multiple fields of employment. Additionally, financial education and access to financial services lessens the racial wealth and wage gaps.

Too many Marylanders are struggling to secure full-time employment and to build economic security. With the growing demand for highly-skilled workers in the labor force - internships, apprenticeships, and alternative career exploration programs are a way to train and steer qualified individuals towards these positions. Promoting the careers of these Marylanders is an investment in not only their futures, but also the State's economy. For these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

For more information, contact:

Ioana Stoica / Policy Advocate / ioana@jotf.org / 240-643-0059

SB 551.Service Year Option Program.pdf

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

BILL: Senate Bill 551
TITLE: Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)
DATE: February 22, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 551 which would establish a new state agency and program devoted to increasing the participation of Maryland's young adults in rewarding jobs in the fields of education, environment, and health. MABE supports the creation of this new program in order to bolster the framework of college and career readiness envisioned by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and further benefit the futures of our talented youth.

This legislation would establish the Service Year Option Program primarily as a supportive gateway to rewarding careers for recent high school graduates. The program is designed as an additional option to pursuing career and technical training or postsecondary education, which are supported by programs funded through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. MABE agrees that there is great value in promoting the value of careers in public impact employment, particularly considering the needs to recruit youth into educational and job training programs leading to employment in our public school systems. Local boards recognize the merits of providing participants in the program with not only job training but also mentoring and other supports while beginning to work and throughout the program year.

Senate Bill 551 articulates the key facets of the Service Year Option Program, including the responsibilities of the new Department of Service and Civic Innovation to administer the program. The legislation ensures that participants will be working at least 30 hours a week, being paid \$15 an hour, and supported by an on-site mentor. In addition, program participants who complete a year of service will be eligible for a stipend of up to \$3,000 from the department. Again, MABE greatly appreciates that the bill directs the new Department of Civic and Service Innovation to develop focus areas to address priority issues, including education, environment, and health.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

SB551_MACC_FAV_JGreene.pdf

Uploaded by: Johntel Greene

Position: FAV

FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Testimony by
Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director
February 22, 2023**

SB551 - Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

POSITION: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, support this legislation and thanks Governor Moore, Senate President Ferguson, and all co-sponsors for their introduction of this important bill.

The establishment of a Service Year Program will help develop a more skilled, humanitarian and educated workforce, essential to Maryland's continued economic growth. The Program as structured has the potential provide more equitable access and opportunity for our young people, which is required to address the social needs of all Maryland communities.

Of those Maryland high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education immediately after high school, almost one-third enroll in community college. Maryland's community colleges, therefore, could enroll recent high school graduates both before and/or after their Service Year participation. A similar possibility exists for recent GED-recipients, many of whom earn their GEDs at their local community college. This means our institutions will both benefit from receiving students who have completed their Service Year Program and may also provide participants to the Service Year program, including dually enrolled and newly enrolled students.

The service year option incentivizes participation in meaningful social service and the participants' pursuit of higher education and employment-enhancing certifications. We fully support the Governor's mission to introduce a life-enhancing program for Maryland's young people.

MACC requests a favorable on SB551.

SB 551 EEE Governor's Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: June Chung

Position: FAV



WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND
21401-1925

February 22, 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 551, the SERVE ACT.

I've said before, and I believe deeply, that with all the challenges our state and nation are facing, it is service that will save us. From the first day of my administration, I have worked to make Maryland a state of service. My second executive order established the Department of Service and Civic Innovation with the goal of bringing together offices and programs that support service opportunities under one umbrella. And I know this goal of elevating service is a goal that the legislature shares, as you and your colleagues across the street did extraordinary work building the framework for a sister program to the service year, the Maryland Corps program. The SERVE Act would advance our shared goal of elevating service, establishing an opportunity for young people from across the state to engage in a year of service after high school.

In my inaugural address and the State of the State, I shared with you what service has meant to me. It has transformed me, strengthened me, tested me, and broadened my perspectives. My journey started with military school then expanded to serving in the armed forces, and running nonprofits focused on supporting underserved students and fighting poverty. And now the Service Year Option Program established by this bill will provide young people of every background in every jurisdiction the opportunity to serve our State and gain real-world skills and experience.

The service year serves as a bridge to a participant's next steps in employment or education, whether it be a new career, public service, technical training, an apprenticeship, postsecondary education, or another service program. Not only does the service year provide the participant valuable work experience, expanding our commitment to the Service Year Program can bring people together in these divisive times and increase civic engagement and participation. For the many young Marylanders who complete high school but may not know what to do next, this

program will give them access to real-world experience, to mentoring, and to career development.

Senate Bill 551 sets up a framework for the Service Year Option Program that will be implemented by the Secretary of the Department of Service and Civic Innovation. Students who have received a high school diploma, certificate of completion, or equivalent level of education within the last two years are eligible to participate at the discretion of the Secretary. Participants will be paid, they will partner with a mentor, and they will participate in opportunities for personal growth beyond their work. At the successful completion of a service year, participants will also be awarded a \$3,000 stipend. The intent is to be expansive with employers partnering with us in the Program, so we are looking for both public and private sector parties to engage with us. The end goal is to create a network of service year opportunities throughout the State while also building up and working with our existing service opportunities and apprenticeship programs.

We have an opportunity with this bill to continue our shared work to elevate service. To make Maryland a state of service. To engage thousands of Marylanders in the work of building a stronger state. I look forward to working alongside you in this effort.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

2023_SB551_MSDETestimony_Support_WRITTEN_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Dayhoff

Position: FAV



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

BILL:	Senate Bill (SB) 551	DATE:	February 22, 2023
SUBJECT:	Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)	COMMITTEE:	Education, Energy, and the Environment
POSITION:	Support		
CONTACT:	Justin Dayhoff 410-767-0449 justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov		

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports Senate Bill (SB) 551 – *Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)* and the creation of the Department of Service and Civic Innovation.

Senate Bill 551 aligns with the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future’s aspirations of college and career attainment and recognizes that many different students require an opportunity to engage in service while contemplating the high-stakes decisions associated with selecting post-kindergarten through grade twelve college and career pathways and, ultimately, career attainment.

The bill, as drafted, amends the Education article but places no new burdens or work project on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as the law establishes the Department of Service and Civic Innovation, which will ultimately administer the program. MSDE appreciates the value of service learning and the opportunity for a service year for Maryland high-school completers. MSDE stands ready for any close collaboration and coordination with the Department of Service and Civic Innovation and local education agencies, which may be necessary in order to successfully implement the infrastructure necessary to message, engage, and socialize the Service Year Option Program Statewide.

MSDE respectfully requests that you consider this letter of support as you deliberate Senate Bill 551 – *Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)*. Please contact Justin Dayhoff, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Financial Planning, Operations, and Strategy by phone at 410-767-0439, or by email at justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov for additional information.

Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Servi

Uploaded by: Laura Stewart

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland Senate
Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023) - SB 551
Education, Energy, and the Environment - For the Hearing on
February 22, 2023
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state’s premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***Senate Bill 551 aligns with the Free State PTA’s legislative agenda that all children have a right to an excellent equitable education.***

Senate Bill 551 establishes a service year option to recent high school graduates and other individuals with similar levels of education, who are focusing on career areas of service including health, education and climate. Free State PTA especially supports the bill requirement that the program participant would receive professional development, mentoring, job training and other support while working in high-impact service placements. These supports are part of an equitable education, adding resources to families that do not have access to these opportunities.

The education system is currently in need of more teachers¹, and this program would help encourage high school graduates to enter the education workforce. This program would support the “grow our own” movement by employing Maryland graduates with Maryland jobs in education. Also, we need more health care workers² and this program would open opportunities for recent graduates in that field as well.

This service year option gives recent graduates who are not enrolled in college or training another avenue to start a career and receive guidance as well as training. In the long run, we believe that this year should be expanded eventually to include an optional additional year for graduates who need more comprehensive experience. **Therefore, Free State PTA urges a favorable vote in support of Senate Bill 551.**

Marla Posey-Moss

Marla Posey-Moss, President
mposey-moss@fspta.org

¹ <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2022/10/06/maryland-teachers-quitting-larger-exodus-could-follow/>

² <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/maryland-nurse-workforce-projections-globaldata.pdf>

SB 551 Support.pdf
Uploaded by: Maddie Long
Position: FAV



**Testimony in support of
Senate Bill 551: Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Favorable**

February 22, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. We advocate for legislative and regulatory policy changes to further educational equity and build the technical capacity of everyday Marylanders to hold state and local officials accountable to their responsibilities. **We stand in support of Senate Bill 551.**

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state’s students. Now that the Blueprint is law, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to implement a framework that sets students up for success, especially in areas of ensuring college and career readiness and providing a diverse education workforce. This bill supports the work of the Blueprint through establishing a service year option program in the state of Maryland.

Senate Bill 551:

- Expands opportunities for recent high school graduates and other individuals with similar levels of education beyond college or career and technical training;
- Grants access to professional development, mentoring, networking, and job training opportunities for program participants; and

- Addresses short- and long-term state challenges of recruitment and retention, especially in high-needs areas like education.

We are experiencing severe deficits of employees in the state. The Maryland State Department of Education alone has [196.5 vacant positions](#) with 123 vacancies above the fiscal 2024 budgeted turnover. Further, the Blueprint *created* certain positions to meet the needs of the law. It is crucial to ensure these positions are filled for full and faithful implementation. If not, we will begin to see the severity of consequences of inaction, including our carefully constructed programs being mismanaged, local education agencies functioning without support, and the Blueprint investment itself completely nullified. This bill supports the Blueprint in two key areas: expanded opportunities for students as they depart public school college and career ready; and investment in a pipeline of talent to fill current and future staffing needs in Maryland.

This legislation presents an opportunity to bring service learning to a state level. Service learning programs like Teach for America and AmeriCorps allow graduates to explore public service and serve their communities, while still earning money and developing professionally. [A recent study](#) of an AmeriCorps program in Nevada found significant returns on investment, including: improved outcomes for various stakeholders; increased post-service earnings; increased tax revenue for government; and reduced lifetime spending on corrections, public assistance, and social insurance. Let Maryland lead the country by introducing this proven strategy through a state initiative.

SB 551 supports the Blueprint's vision to set the foundation for lifelong learning and achievement. We have promised World-Class schools. Let us provide World-Class service learning options beyond K-12 education to strengthen the future of our state.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 551.

For more information, contact:

Maddie Long

maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org

SB 551 MICUA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: FAV

140 South Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Written Support

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
SB 551 Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

Matt Power, President

mpower@micua.org

February 22, 2023

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the 56,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of [SB 551 Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment \(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023\)](#).

MICUA strongly supports the creation of a Department of Service and Civic Innovation. A cornerstone of a liberal arts education is the belief that every individual has an inherent commitment to service and participation in civic life. We commend the Administration for creating this important new department in State Government.

MICUA sees numerous ways that its institutions can partner with the Department of Service and Civic Innovation both as an employer of service year participants, as well as offering service year participants opportunities to pursue a postsecondary education after their service year is complete. Many MICUA members have offices that focus on community service and providing students with opportunities to operationalize what they learn in the classroom into real world experience working in their community. Our institutions offer many courses with service learning embedded in the curriculum, giving students an opportunity to reflect on the service experience and how the course learning outcomes were achieved.

MICUA commends the Moore Administration for creating such an important Department and more importantly, opportunities for young Marylanders to both enhance themselves and their communities through civic service. All of our institutions look forward to partnering with the Administration on this endeavor and working together on innovative and creative partnerships that benefit Maryland's students and communities.

For these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 551.



AFFILIATES



Student Global Ambassador Leaders

Uploaded by: Michele Joseph

Position: FAV

Testimony from Michele Joseph, CEO of Student Global Ambassador Leaders (SGAP Leaders)

I started the Student Global Ambassador Program ([SGAP Leaders](#)) when I realized there were fewer and fewer opportunities for BIOPOC, first generation, and young women to excel. I grew up near Takoma Park in a once upper middle class neighborhood in Wheaton, Maryland. My Trinidadian immigrant parents valued education and instilled in me that “education is the only way” to elevate the next generation. I have since learned that experiential education, coupled with social-emotional support, and applied skills provide needed scaffolding for our high school students to thrive - especially during the current post-pandemic era.

My mother taught at MCPS, and my son and I attended MCPS. The community that surrounded me as I attended school was not wealthy, but it provided critical vehicles in which I matriculated from college and later earned my graduate degree. I was one of the fortunate ones. Today, critical vehicles which afford opportunities to develop interpersonal, real-world problem solving, networking, communication and collaboration skills are rare. As a result, our teens are woefully prepared for the challenges at college and in their career. Today my neighborhood has more crime and more single- parent working families. Moreover, the local schools offer a narrower curriculum and fewer extra curricular activities. College has become unaffordable for many, and has limited return on investments for jobs or careers for recent graduates. Wheaton, where I live now, along with Takoma Park, reflect pockets of poverty in Montgomery county. Minimum wage jobs have multiplied and career pathways to the middle class have narrowed to a rocky, hard-to-navigate, uphill terrain. I started SGAP Leaders in 2016, and so far, we have impacted over 5,000 middle and high school students with our programming that is designed to engage, empower and inspire our students to enter STEM and Sustainability-related careers. All our programs have a service component. In addition, our graduates from our programs see themselves as leaders in climate action, civic engagement, environmental justice and more. We target underserved, and underrepresented teens who often reside in the pockets of poverty in Montgomery County. We hope to impact all teens in each county within the state. As such, HB 546 is a step in the right direction. We believe that it will provide the foundation to develop a sustainable mechanism for all teens to develop critical skills needed for life-long learning, and for them to positively impact their communities. We know the future for our students, communities and our state must be different. I am in support of HB 456 and wish to share the following points about the bill:

We appreciate H.R 546 for a number of reasons --it finally gives our youth --some would term disconnected youth--some resources to help them navigate a new employment landscape. It makes clear that the “Service Year Option Program ” is as much, if not more, about youth needing support for discovering and developing their career pathway, as it is about youth giving back to their communities. It recognizes that many students today need help and support to find their path; and, that path does not have to lead towards a four-year college degree which may be unaffordable for many families. It is also a timely initiative coming at the end of a global pandemic that delayed our students’ acquisition of critical skills needed for life-long learning, and in many cases, left them behind. What we offer are some pointers to help improve the bill.

- 1) Too modest in its ambitions--for a state run initiative that offers a year of service to all Maryland’s high school graduates. Growing the numbers of participants from 200, in its first year of operation (Due to begin July 1 2023), to 20,000 in its fourth year 2028 is quite frankly a drop in the bucket. **There are over 58,000 high school students who graduate high school each year. We should aim to reach--at least 20 percent of them with this legislation** --that translates to 3,000 for the first year building up to 30,000 by the eighth year of operation.

- 2) **Employers need a larger set of incentives to engage with the program.** The bill as written today favors only the largest of corporations that can afford to do the mentoring and specialized job guidance. BIPOC and women owned businesses tend to be small or mid sized, and would not be as able to participate in the program as the larger, and often, less diverse ones. Tax breaks or other incentives for the medium and small business (including non-profits) participation should be added to the mix. As a result, it would provide an opportunity for a broader and more diverse group of companies to participate.
- 3) Strengthen the regional offices that are contemplated in the legislation so they can help create localized career pathways including needed apprenticeship programs to assist young people who are eager to work for a green energy future. The [National Apprenticeship Week](#) survey found that **almost three-quarters of teens and young adults seek career paths** that would enable them to impact the environment positively, but there is - at present no (as far as we can discover) green energy career pathway that involves apprenticeship training in Maryland. This office will need to set up advisory panels to involve green energy companies and relevant unions to work with educational institutions to create curriculum and to enable a career pipeline to flow. Such advisory committees must include BIPOC, 1st generation, non profits and women to ensure that diversity efforts are maintained.
- 4) Everyone needs to have skin in the game. The funding for the bill needs to be supplemented by contributions from the companies that will benefit from the legislation--those in the green energy, health and education space that will benefit from having developed a new, vibrant and skilled workforce. Based on size and carbon footprint, they need to contribute to an educational fund that will enable the added support systems many in the BIPOC populations will need. These include summer youth employment programs, tutoring and customized mentoring programs as well as the design of apprenticeship programs and outreach efforts to schools and communities that typically are not reached in such statewide efforts.

So we stand ready to assist the committee in any way we can to move this much needed legislation forward and hope that we can, in a bipartisan fashion, move our state forward. We need this bill to become a model for the nation and with much work and energy, I feel confident we can accomplish this worthy goal.

Michele Joseph

Michele Joseph

CEO, SGAP Leaders

mj@sgapleaders.org

862-242-0226

SB 551- Education - Service Year Option Program -

Uploaded by: Nicole Stallings

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 22, 2023

To: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 551- Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

Dear Chair Feldman:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 551.

MHA applauds Governor Moore and Speaker Jones for championing this legislation. Maryland hospitals are at a critical juncture—facing the most significant staffing shortage in recent memory. A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce now and in the future.

SB 551 aligns with many of the report's recommendations to expand Maryland's workforce pipeline, including stipends or financial incentives to pursue careers in high demand health care fields. We know our health care workforce is impacted by the same social determinants affecting our patients. Mentoring and wraparound supports are vital for students to focus and achieve their educational goals.

Hospital data show high vacancy rates for licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists, registered nurses, and surgical technicians. One in five—or 18.9%—of nursing assistant positions are currently vacant.¹ Over the past year, Maryland hospitals worked together to address the high demand for certified nursing assistants (CNAs) by creating an acute care CNA pathway. The CNA workforce can grow the nursing pipeline if proper supports are in place for career advancement and administrative barriers are removed, just like this legislation proposes.

For these reasons we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 551.

For more information, please contact:

Nicole Stallings, Executive Vice President and Chief External Affairs Officer
Nstallings@mhaonline.org

¹ MHA Workforce Survey – January 2023

SB0551_CC_Vaughan_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Regan Vaughan

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 551
Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)
Budget & Taxation Committee
February 22, 2023
Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports Senate Bill 551 which would create a service year option for recent high school graduates.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors. We recognize the importance of exposing young adults to public interest careers.

Year of service opportunities provide job training and experience that is often used as a jumping off point – participants could go on to be hired by the agency they served with or to continue working in that field. Even for those that go into other fields after their year of service, they often learn skills that translate into other job settings.

Employers also benefit from a well-structured service year program. The young, fresh employees bring a new level of energy to the work improving the work environment all around. This new pool of workers will also help to address the workforce crisis that we are facing – especially in the healthcare fields.

A service year is often personally transformative for individuals creating a more empathetic society. Even if the participant chooses not to continue in public service or to work in other fields that seem unrelated, like private business, they are bringing a level of empathy and civic-mindedness that they gain from their service experience.

We are excited about the prospect of a service year program and look forward to working with the Administration to shape a program that benefits the individual participants, meets the growing needs of Maryland's non-profit employers and creates a more civic-minded populous.

For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 551.

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director Advocacy

KABOOM - 2023 SB 551 FAV - Service Year Option - S

Uploaded by: Robert Mayer

Position: FAV



**Testimony in Support of SB 551
Education - Service Year Option Program – Establishment
Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023
Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
February 22, 2023**

KABOOM! is a national non-profit organization dedicated to ending playspace inequity in communities across the country. For over two-decades we have worked extensively in Maryland and recently launched a multi-year partnership, called 25 in 5, with the Baltimore City Recreation and Parks Department and the Baltimore City Public School System. Over the next five years we will work with our public partners to construct or refurbish approximately 90 playgrounds throughout the city to provide easier and more equitable access for students and families to the play infrastructure we believe every child has a right to enjoy.

In the course of our work, the need for a dedicated and highly trained workforce in the outdoor recreation maintenance and program sectors has become apparent. Play infrastructure is only capable of meeting the needs of children if it is well maintained. Learning how to evaluate playspaces, identify equipment needs, work effectively with community stakeholders (including children) to design their playgrounds, and then maintain a safe play environment are critical skills which can be acquired by a wide range of individuals if they are properly trained. The Governor's proposed Service Year Option Program can act as an effective vehicle for such training.



This bill will provide public entities and non-profit organizations the ability to recruit and provide services for young people interested in working in parks and playgrounds. This work can often be intellectually stimulating, physically engaging, and draws upon a wide range of skills. It can also provide individuals with a variety of good-paying career options without requiring them to get a four-year degree. Ensuring that participants who wish to explore these fields through this program will not only provide them with an exciting array of career opportunities but also assist struggling municipal governments to address a growing staffing shortage that, if ignored, could manifest into a workforce crisis.

Parks departments across the state are struggling to recruit and retain staff interested in park and playground evaluation, maintenance, and construction. These struggles not only create a costly maintenance backlog but also the possibility of allowing play environments to become unsafe through deferred maintenance. Children and their families deserve playgrounds that are well maintained and pose no threat to the safety and well-being of their users. Through this program, these departments and the non-profit organizations which support them—like KABOOM!—can better perform our work.

Not only would this program help meet our mutually shared goals of improving the quality of parks and playgrounds, but a focus on these facilities aligns with the bill's stated priority issues: climate, education, and health. By improving Maryland's parks, trails, and playgrounds this initiative the State will also be improving the environmental quality of communities, helping students engage in age-appropriate social activities that have been linked to better academic performance, and provided more opportunities for physical activity which have been linked to preventing obesity and other nutritionally-related diseases.

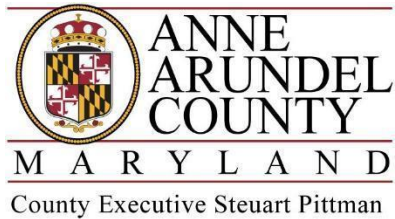


For these reasons, we strongly urge the legislature to quickly pass this legislation and ensure the fund has the adequate appropriation. KABOOM! is confident that, once launched, this program will have a far reaching positive impact on young people currently looking for a new employment opportunity. We would like to thank Governor Wes Moore for proposing this initiative and look forward to working with his Administration on its implementation.

Anne Arundel County_FAV_SB551.pdf

Uploaded by: Steuart Pittman

Position: FAV



February 22, 2023

Senate Bill 551

Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

House Appropriations Committee

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 551 – Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023). This Bill would establish a Service Year Option Program administered by the Department of Service and Civic Innovation, require a Program participant to work at least 30 hours per week and partner with an on-site mentor while working in a service placement, and require a participating employer to pay a Program participant \$15 per hour and authorize the Department to disburse a stipend to participants who complete the program.

Service year programs build stronger, healthier communities and are an invaluable resource for both program participants and the communities they serve. Service year programs enable participants to gain experience, and communities to receive assistance, in critical fields like education, environmental stewardship, housing, disaster relief, healthcare, and more. They also provide participants the opportunity to serve alongside people from diverse backgrounds and life experiences and develop meaningful relationships. Creating a robust well-funded service year option to provide young Marylanders the opportunity to serve their communities and fellow residents will help address some of the many challenges we face while also elevating the value of service among our future leaders.

For all of these reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 551.

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

Testimony in Support of SB 551, Service Year Optio

Uploaded by: Vincent DeMarco

Position: FAV



**Testimony Before the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
In Support of Senate Bill 551 – Service Year Option Program
By Vincent DeMarco, Maryland Citizens’ Health Initiative**

February 22, 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee, on behalf of the Maryland Citizens’ Health Initiative, I am here to support, SB 551, Governor Wes Moore’s service year option program. We commend the Governor for devising this innovative way to help Marylanders service their communities, and in particular we appreciate very much that health care work is one of the three identified service options. Like all of you, we hear much about how people often cannot get the health care they need because of the health care workforce shortages in our state. We are very hopeful that this program will help remedy this problem and help us to reach our common goal of making sure that all Marylanders can get the health care services they need. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our individual organization, Maryland Citizens’ Health Initiative, Inc., because we have not reviewed this legislation with our entire Maryland Health Care For All! Coalition.

SB0551-EEE_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 551

Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

Date: February 22, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 551 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would establish a new State Department of Service and Civic Innovation and a Service Year Option Program Fund to support the Department and its operations. An amendment to target the public sector workforce could help strengthen the bill's effect.

Public sector employment is in crisis across the board – for the State and local governments alike – and counties commend SB 551's innovative policy solution to address the complex and challenging issues of workforce development and public service. One of the goals of the program is strengthening the pipeline of talent into the State and local governments – a goal that counties welcome and are also working toward, individually and collectively.

Under that goal, SB 551 specifies that the Service Year Option will focus service year placements in the noble areas of climate, education, and health. Counties strongly agree that these areas desperately deserve additional support and attention. In fact, counties are supporting a number of legislative initiatives this session, focused on these professional areas. Furthermore, one of MACo's 2023 initiatives is to address these issues specifically facing volunteer and professional firefighting.

As prime employers and major frontline-service providers across Maryland, counties remain ready to continue addressing public workforce needs, including through the mechanism envisioned in SB 551.

Counties do believe, however, that the bill – and Marylanders – would best be served with a friendly amendment to add to the short list of priority service placements: “POSITIONS IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FACING PERSISTENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES.” These should include, but not be limited to: first responders, public and environmental health professionals, and public works and trade-skilled positions.

Counties look forward to working with the legislature and Administration on SB 551 and similar measures to strengthen Maryland's public workforce. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.

Service Year Alliance - SB 551 - SERVE Act - FWA.p

Uploaded by: Kristen Bennett

Position: FWA



The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senate Bill 551 - Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration (SERVE) Act of 2023 -
Favorable with Amendments

February 22, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Education, Energy & Environment Committee
Members:

Service Year Alliance is pleased to support Senate Bill 551, the SERVE Act, which would create a service year option for Maryland high school graduates. Service Year Alliance is a national nonprofit which seeks to make a service year — a paid opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service — an expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. Our organization supports service year programs across the country with tools and resources to help elevate and expand the service year field. Service years transform lives, offering young people postsecondary pathways into college and career and building talent pipelines into the public and nonprofit sectors. Service years also meet urgent community needs in areas like education, conservation, clean energy, public health, re-entry services, and much more. As Governor Moore expressed in his State of the State address, service years can help to rebuild our country's social fabric, bringing individuals together across lines of difference as the "antidote to loneliness and otherness."

Governor Moore's proposed Service Year Option will make Maryland a model for the country in offering service year opportunities specifically targeted for high school graduates and those who have earned their GED. As outlined, the Service Year Option will offer a host of high-quality benefits and wraparound support services, including compensating participants at \$15 per hour, a post-service stipend, mentoring and networking opportunities with fellow participants across the state, and a flexible schedule to make service an accessible and financially feasible option for those with caregiving and other commitments. This high-quality program design adopts many of the best practices laid out in Service Year Alliance's recent [Equity Agenda for National Service](#) and is necessary in order to equitably expand service years in Maryland and across the country.

Three minor fixes or amendments could help to improve the design and implementation of this innovative service year legislation:

First, we would urge the General Assembly to not recreate the wheel when it comes to building and maintaining an online portal to advertise service year opportunities, as outlined in proposed §24-11A-03 (A) (6). Since 2015, Service Year Alliance has been proud to develop and maintain [ServiceYear.org](https://www.serviceyear.org), a state of the art and mobile-accessible online marketplace that connects young people to service year opportunities nationwide. ServiceYear.org is used by programs and state service commissions across the country, provides a common application so that individuals can easily apply to multiple opportunities, and is powered by a national marketing and awareness campaign backed by years of market research and message testing. ServiceYear.org is the only online platform for service years and could easily be adapted to meet any unique needs of the Service Year Option in Maryland. Giving the new Department of Service and Civic Innovation the flexibility to implement an online portal through internal or external parties would allow the Department to conserve limited resources and leverage existing infrastructure.

Second, the Service Year Option's emphasis on geographic diversity should extend not only to youth participants, but also to participating service year programs and employers to ensure that organizations all across the state can benefit. In §24-11A-03 (A) (2), the General Assembly may want to clarify the role of the regional program leaders, and how these nonprofits will interact with the Department to ensure program quality and consistency across regions, and to avoid duplication.

Finally, the Committee may want to state that the Service Year Option Program Fund is able to accept federal funding sources, including competitive and formula dollars from agencies and accounts like AmeriCorps (formerly known as the Corporation for National and Community Service), U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and other forthcoming resources from the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Sustainably braiding state and federal funds within the new Department of Service and Civic Innovation will help participating service year programs offer high-quality opportunities to Maryland youth and lower administrative burden at the program level. The Department should also consider coordinating with other state Departments, including MD Energy Administration and MD Dept. of Natural Resources, to expand clean energy and climate resilience service year opportunities, replicating [successful state partnerships in Minnesota and elsewhere](#). For more background, please see Service Year Alliance's recent report, [Expanding Service Years in State and Local Communities](#), published jointly with AmeriCorps and America's Service Commissions.

The Committee should also make a clear distinction between employment and service. In statute or regulation, clearly defining service and what kind of activities may qualify as service is critically important, particularly as it relates to participating private employers. Involving the private sector as host organizations can be a useful addition, so long as the legislative intent of what constitutes service and a participant's scope of service is clear and that the placement is

addressing a community need. Federal AmeriCorps resources cannot be leveraged at private, for-profit employers, per statutory requirements. Additionally, the General Assembly should use consistent language to refer to service placements exclusively as service, not as work or employment. This nuance is an important distinction in federal authorizing legislation, and the state may want to adopt similar language, particularly in §24-11A-01 and -04.

The proposed Service Year Option would layer on top of existing service year programming in Maryland, uniquely targeting young people directly out of high school or GED programs and investing in youth at a critical juncture in their personal and professional trajectories. Maryland is fortunate to have a strong existing network of AmeriCorps and YouthBuild programs, as well as several state-funded programs including the Maryland Conservation Corps, the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps, Volunteer MD, and the nascent Maryland Corps. With the addition of the Service Year Option, Maryland is poised to lead the nation in equitable and accessible service year opportunities, building professional on-ramps for youth of all backgrounds and creating talent pipelines into the public sector. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to issue a favorable report with outlined amendments for clarity and flexibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important legislation. With additional questions, please contact Melissa Bender, Director, Government Relations at mbender@serviceyear.org.

Sincerely,

Kristen Bennett
CEO, Service Year Alliance

SB551_The Arc Maryland_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Scott

Position: FWA



The Arc Maryland
8601 Robert Fulton Drive
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046
T 410.571.9320
www.thearcmd.org

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
SB 551: Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)
February 22, 2023

Position: **Support with Amendment**

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We support the Governor's Service Year Option Program with amendments designed to include all graduating students, and students with disabilities exiting high school with a Certificate of High School Completion will have the option to participate.

The employment rate of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is currently very low compared to their typical peers. In addition, people with more significant disabilities may not be able to tolerate full time work, but **want to work** and will work as much as their conditions will allow them to work.

According to the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration's employment data from May 2022, less than 30% of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive DDA services were engaged in paid employment. The average number of hours of work people worked per week was 25.2 hours with 22.2% working more than 20 hours per week.¹ This number is increasing every year due to our Employment First mindset, training, and supports but is low compared to people with other disabilities and also compared with the rest of the population.

This bill would create a paid service year opportunity to exiting high school students and would provide an amazing lift to individuals with disabilities to have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and talents with employers who receive incentives to hire them. We believe that this opportunity may very well lead to continued employment, beyond that introductory period, for many people.

The definition of "Program Participant", in the bill, does not currently include students who are exiting High School with a **Certificate of High School Completion**. We believe all students who complete the requirements of high school should be eligible for the work/service opportunity as it will help them contribute to the economy, and advance their opportunities for success in employment post high school.

We believe it was not the intention of the sponsors to disqualify students exiting with Certificates from this program and hope this unintended omission can be easily remedied. We recommend the following amendments to clarify that **all students who complete high school (with a Diploma or Certificate) or have an equivalent degree such as a GED can participate in the Program with flexibility in the number of hours they will work, in accordance with their individualized abilities to work each week.**

¹ https://www.statedata.info/mdda/charts/activity_2.php



The Arc Maryland
8601 Robert Fulton Drive
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046
T 410.571.9320
www.thearcmd.org

Proposed bill amendments are as follows:

Page 3, lines 1-6:

(F) "PROGRAM PARTICIPANT" MEANS AND INDIVIDUAL WHO: (1) HAS RECEIVED A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, GED, OR COMPARABLE PROOF OF EQUIVALENT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL WITHIN 2 YEARS BEFORE APPLYING FOR A SERVICE PLACEMENT UNDER THE PROGRAM; **OR (2) HAS RECEIVED A MARYLAND HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION.**

page 5, line 9:

(I) WORK AT LEAST 30 HOURS PER WEEK, **UNLESS OTHERWISE APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT.**

We appreciate the intention of this bill and we are grateful for the opportunity to provide comment.

Please contact:

Lori Scott, President of the Board of Directors
Parent of a High School student with disabilities
The Arc Maryland

SB551.DD Coalition.SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FWA



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 22, 2023

SB551: Education – Service Year Option Program - Establishment
Position: Support with Amendment



8601 Robert Fulton Dr
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046



1500 Union Avenue
Suite 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211



8835 Columbia 100 Pky
Suite P
Columbia, MD 21044



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

217 E Redwood Street
Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202



7000 Tudsbury Road
Windsor Mill, MD
21244

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As such, the DD Coalition supports the Governor’s Service Year Option Program with an amendment to make sure all students with disabilities, including students with significant support needs, have the option to participate.

People with disabilities will benefit from this Program. It gives youth and young adults with and without disabilities the opportunity to provide services to organizations that support people with disabilities, and also gives youth and young adults with disabilities the opportunity to serve others. It is particularly important to focus on the skills and abilities of youth and young adults with disabilities.

➤ **Only 50.6% of Marylanders with disabilities participate in the workforce.**

That percentage decreases significantly for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Students who exit high school at age 21 with a Certificate of High School Completion are often students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who transition to long-term services and supports through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). DDA funds services and supports to make sure people live the lives they want. This includes working and having meaningful days when not working. A service year could allow young adults who receive supports from the DDA explore, develop, and demonstrate skills that lead to employment.

To make sure those students are eligible for that opportunity, we strongly recommend the following amendments that makes clear all students can participate in the Program with the support they need to do so:

Page 2, lines 29-31:

(F) “PROGRAM PARTICIPANT” MEANS AND INDIVIDUAL WHO: (1) HAS RECEIVED A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, GED, OR COMPARABLE PROOF OF EQUIVALENT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL WITHIN 2 YEARS BEFORE APPLYING FOR A SERVICE PLACEMENT UNDER THE PROGRAM; **OR (2) HAS RECEIVED A MARYLAND HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION.**

page 5, line 6:

(I) WORK AT LEAST 30 HOURS PER WEEK, **UNLESS OTHERWISE APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT.**

We appreciate the Governor's focus on the importance of service and intention to be inclusive of all students. We wholeheartedly believe the Service Year Option Program benefits people with developmental disabilities in multiple ways. In order to ensure equity and access for all, we support HB546 with the amendments outlined above.

Contact:

Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council: rlondon@md-council.org

2023 SB551 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deborah Brocato

Position: UNF



Opposition Statement SB551

Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment
(Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant
Maryland Right to Life

We Oppose SB551

On behalf of our 200,000 followers across the state, we respectfully object to SB551. While providing entry into the workforce is a positive in general, we oppose the program being used to recruit program participants into the abortion industry workforce. We oppose any funds for this bill being used to fund the training of participants for the abortion industry. Maryland Right to Life strongly recommends an amendment added with language that would exclude abortion funding and exclude recruitment of participants for the abortion workforce.

In addition to the taxpayer funding of participants for the abortion industry, Maryland Right to Life opposes the further erosion of medical care for the women and girls of Maryland. This program recruits participants with minimal education. Surgical and medical abortions carry a risk of injury up to and including death. Surgical abortions are invasive and the woman or girl risks injuries including a punctured uterus, incomplete abortion, lacerations to the vagina and cervix, sepsis, and death. The risks for a woman or girl taking the abortion pill include hemorrhage, sepsis, incomplete abortion, menstrual abnormalities and death. The women and girls of Maryland deserve the care of trained, licensed physicians. The Abortion Care Access Act of 2022 removed the physician requirement for women and girls seeking abortion. This bill further reduces the quality of medical care that women and girls receive in Maryland.

Maryland is one of only 4 states that forces taxpayer funding of abortion. Maryland taxpayers should not be forced to subsidize the recruitment and training of workers for the abortion industry, especially workers that put the health of women and girls in jeopardy.

Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. The 2023 Marist poll shows that 60% of Americans, pro-life and pro-choice, oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. 81% of Americans favor public funds being prioritized for health and family planning services that save the lives of mothers and their children including programs for improving maternal health and birth and delivery outcomes, well baby care and parenting classes.

For these reasons, we ask for an unfavorable report on **SB551**.

Testimony_SB0551.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony SB0551

I am quite opposed to this "Year of Service" proposal. My opposition stems from it being not the role of the State to effectively draft our youth into a modern version of the civilian conservation corps, and my opposition is furthered by this "Year of Service" not being more about inculcating our youth than about public works.

Education should be about teaching our youth how to think, not what to think.

I also question the ethics of this "Year of Service", as it is tantamount to conscript labor, which is far from ethical and of dubious legality.