



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