TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE
ENVIRONMENT

SB 982 (INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – MODERNIZATION OF
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS)

MANOJ SRIVASTAVA
CHAIR, MODERNIZE MARYLAND OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

POSITION: SUPPORT
February 22, 2024

Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the committee! Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Manoj Srivastava, chair of the Modernize Maryland Oversight Commission. I have been in the private sector, particularly in the cybersecurity space for 25 years, and am a proud resident of the State of Maryland. I urge favorable consideration of the SB 982 bill.

The bill includes a vast number of recommendations from the Modernize Maryland Oversight Commission's report to achieve various modernization objectives. They span modernization funding, governance, planning, management and IT organization, and procurement, adopting a "whole of state" mindset.

I have a few key points of view regarding how we should look at technology modernization for the state.

First, modernization is an opportunity to not only focus on legacy modernization to produce more secure, reliable, and maintainable systems at optimal costs but also to rethink and transform how the business of government is done and how a practical end-to-end experience of IT services is delivered to the citizens from their point of view. Drawing parallels from my role in the cybersecurity private sector, vendors have shifted over the past few years to a cybersecurity platform-based approach in delivering solutions to their customers rather than following a disparate best-of-breed point solution approach. That mindset of providing a holistic solution improves the total cost of ownership, adoption, and maintenance for the end customer and significantly enhances the customer's experience. The platform-based approach has accelerated the establishment of deeper alliances between cybersecurity vendors, with the vital beneficiary being a much-improved end-to-end experience for their customers.

FAVORABLE

Second, with that lens into modernization, the state must establish a dedicated modernization IT investment fund with funding direction from a cross-functional IT Modernization Investment Board. Along with this, there must also be the proper structure in place to ensure transparency about the progress in addressing modernization objectives across the Executive Branch.

Third, as we execute these goals, we must seek ways to deliver value to the citizens often. Many of us have not only seen the technology revolution from the birth of a silicon chip and its evolution but also personally experienced how the value in the form of millions of products and technologies built with that fundamental component has transformed our lives. We are fortunate to be part of a second similar technology revolution in our lifetime with Generative AI. While the technology around large language models evolves every day, the value from applications and services built on that underlying technology is visible daily with incremental improvements, intending to continually improve the end user's experience. From my shoes in the private sector, the key to remaining competitive in the markets we compete in while leveraging such technologies is to deliver value early and often.

Finally, this report is delivered at the end of the first year of the Moore-Miller Administration. There is clearly a sense of excitement within the new team that Secretary Savage has put together at DoIT. We recognize, however, that the Administration's vision "to bring Maryland to the forefront of cutting-edge and emergent technology in better service of our State" cannot be achieved unless the Department is properly resourced and empowered. Given the technical debt of the State, we believe achieving this strategy is likely a multi-billion and multi-year endeavor if taken seriously.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify!