



Office of The Mayor Celina R. Benitez

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Favorable Support for Senate Bill 981

Dear Honorable Chair Senator Feldman, vice Chair Senator Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am Mayor Celina Benitez of the City of Mount Rainier, and I write to you today in strong support of Senate Bill 981, "Local Cybersecurity Preparedness and Local Cybersecurity Support Fund - Alterations." In an era where cybersecurity threats are increasingly sophisticated and pervasive, the provisions of SB 981 are not just necessary; they are critical to safeguarding the integrity of our local governments and school systems.

The bill's proposal to authorize a \$10,000,000 appropriation for the Local Cybersecurity Support Fund for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 demonstrates a proactive and strategic approach to enhancing our cybersecurity infrastructure. This funding is essential for cities like Mount Rainier, enabling us to fortify our defenses against cyber threats that jeopardize the privacy, security, and welfare of our citizens.

Additionally, SB 981's requirement for the Department of Information Technology to provide sufficient information security officers to assist the Director of Local Cybersecurity will significantly bolster our local governments' capacity to respond to and mitigate cybersecurity risks. The expertise and support of information security officers are invaluable resources in our ongoing efforts to protect our digital infrastructure.

Of particular note is the bill's mandate for local school systems to implement multifactor authentication, endpoint detection and response on all system-owned devices, and network monitoring by July 1, 2025. These measures are critical in protecting the data and privacy of our students, faculty, and staff. In the City of Mount Rainier, we believe in the paramount importance of securing our educational institutions from cyber threats, which not only pose risks to information security but also to the safety and well-being of our children.

Senate Bill 981 presents a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to enhancing cybersecurity preparedness across Maryland. By supporting this bill, we are not only investing in the technological resilience of our local governments and school systems but also in the safety and security of our communities.

I urge the committee to favorably Support for SB 981 and to recognize the importance of robust cybersecurity measures in safeguarding the future of our state.

Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Celina R. Benitez

Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier