

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 1128: Labor and Employment – Workforce Development - Talent Innovation Fund

Dear Chair Beidle:

On behalf of Baltimore Cyber Range (BCR Cyber), I write in strong support of the **House Bill 1128: Labor and Employment – Workforce Development - Talent Innovation Fund**. My name is Bruce Spector, and I am the Chairman and Cofounder of BCR Cyber.

For the past seven years, BCR Cyber, partnering with Maryland’s community colleges, has been a multiple grant recipient to the Department of Labor in its successful EARN program. BCR Cyber has procured, installed and operated a state-of-the-art cyber range in Baltimore City. A cyber range is a cyber-attack simulator that provides experiential training. Think of a flight simulator, but for cybersecurity.

In our seven-year history, we’ve provided cybersecurity training to approximately 1,400 Maryland citizens and I am very proud to say that we’ve placed entry level graduates of our program in over 1,200 full time cyber positions at major Maryland private employers like Northrop Grumman, Booz Allen, and M&T bank.

It is important to note that these are family sustaining jobs that start at an average of \$60,000 per year and after two years of employment, the average exceeds \$100,000. Seventy percent of our trainees are people of color and nearly 50% are female. And that is not just because we believe it is the right thing to do, which it is, but it is essential for our large government contractors in Maryland to have a diverse technical team.

This bill is necessary to allow the State to scale up the talent pipeline and provide the framework and infrastructure to expand and will allow programs that have proven their worth in pilots like EARN to address workforce needs on a much larger scale.

According to the respected organization CyberSeek, there are 31,422 job vacancies in Maryland for cybersecurity. These aren’t jobs that might be created– these are jobs that are waiting to be filled - right now.

However, if we don’t have the infrastructure in place, Maryland won’t be able to place these jobs and employers will fill the vacancies in states that are able to provide the talent.

We need to dramatically expand the pipeline and innovative programs like House Bill 1128 will allow the state to partner with the private sector in these fields like cyber, AI, and advanced manufacturing.

House Bill 1128 sends the right signal to the business community that the Department of Labor will partner with them and expand their efforts to fill these important jobs for our security and economy.

Sincerely,



Bruce S. Spector
Chairman of the Board, BCR Cyber