

Letter to Senate Finance Committee - Talent Innova

Uploaded by: bruce spector

Position: FAV

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

XHB1128_MACC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

Senate Finance Committee

March 21, 2024

HB 1128 - Labor and Employment – Workforce Development – Talent Innovation Program and Fund

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, strongly supports **HB 1128**, which establishes the Talent Innovation Program (TIP) in Maryland, along with the Talent Innovation Fund (TIP Fund). This legislation admirably seeks to increase access to high-quality job training by using innovative and sustainable talent financing mechanisms to help meet the skill needs in Maryland – specifically in cybersecurity, health care, biotechnology, manufacturing, and artificial intelligence.

Maryland's community colleges serve as vital hubs of learning, innovation, and opportunity for countless individuals seeking to improve their lives and contribute meaningfully to society. However, MACC also understands the challenges facing our students and industries today, particularly considering rapidly evolving technological advancements and shifting economic landscapes.

The establishment of TIP in Maryland presents an opportunity to address these challenges head-on by creating a dedicated fund to support innovative talent development initiatives. This would further enhance community colleges' role in preparing individuals for success in Maryland's key industries.

Investing in talent development is not just an investment in individuals; it is an investment in the economic future of our state. By equipping our workforce with the skills needed to excel in key industries, we can drive innovation, attract businesses, and stimulate economic growth and prosperity across Maryland. Accordingly, MACC strongly urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 1128**.

For questions, please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org).

2024-CAMI-HB1128.pdf

Uploaded by: John Fiastro

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE
FINANCE COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 1128
Labor and Employment – Workforce Development – Talent
Innovation Fund
TASHA CORNISH
CYBERSECURITY ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND, INC.

POSITION: FAVORABLE

March 21, 2024

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1128 on behalf of our Board of Directors and membership.

The Cybersecurity Association of Maryland, Inc. (“CAMI”) supports SB 982. CAMI is a statewide, 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization established in 2015, created to drive the growth of Maryland's cybersecurity industry. Our membership includes over 600 firms ranging in size from Fortune 500 companies to solo owner operators and represents nearly 100,000 Maryland employees.

We agree with Governor Moore’s sentiment that in order to “win the decade” we need to deploy innovative strategies to cultivate talent, particularly in industries like cyber, quantum, artificial intelligence, biotech, and advanced manufacturing. With more than 31,000 open cybersecurity jobs in Maryland, the Talent Innovation Fund is poised to serve as a critical mechanism to produce this talent.

The Talent Innovation Fund will allow employers in emerging industries to define skills gaps and workforce training needs which will translate directly into a training curriculum. This will foster meaningful talent development that meets industry demand and provides high paying jobs for Maryland citizens. Importantly, the pilot of the fund will be used for a competitive grant to pilot cyber ranges, which are virtual settings used for cybersecurity training.

Cyber ranges have proven to be a beneficial, hands-on strategy for individuals to hone technical skills and experience and respond to real-life cyber threats. The use of cyber ranges yields a stronger and more prepared workforce. Given Maryland’s prominence in cybersecurity and research strengths with emerging technologies like quantum and AI, this bill will help secure these past investments and solidify Maryland’s continued growth and competition for the jobs of the 21st century.

FAVORABLE

The Talent Innovation Fund is an important tool to scale effective training programs to “win the decade.” As such, CAMI strongly supports this effort and respectfully requests your committee to move this important initiative forward.

HB 1128_Support_MD Economic Council.pdf

Uploaded by: Julie Woepke

Position: FAV



March 21, 2024

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

**House Bill 1128 - Labor and Employment – Workforce Development –
Talent Innovation Program and Fund
SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Economic Council to express our full support for House Bill 1128, the Talent Innovation Fund and Program, which is currently before the House Economic Matters Committee. MEC asks that all members of the Committee support this important legislation from the Governor's Workforce Development Board and the Department of Labor that will leverage our state's assets to create a talent pipeline for emerging industries that will drive economic growth for Maryland.

The Talent Innovation Program and Fund would maximize taxpayer dollars for workforce development by capitalizing on resources from philanthropy and industry to meet training and skills needs in Maryland's prominent and emerging industry sectors, such as cybersecurity, healthcare, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and artificial intelligence. This legislation is needed to create the program and the fund, which has a \$2 million appropriation in the Miller-Moore proposed budget currently before the General Assembly. The Department envisions using that initial \$2 million on competitive grants to support the cybersecurity workforce, an area that our state should continue to lead on.

We are at a pivotal moment in developing these emerging industries: We must decide whether to supercharge our efforts to clearly establish ourselves as a leader or watch as other states take the helm. If we want to compete for these good jobs, capital investment, and innovative industries, we need to create the talent pipeline that takes advantage of our higher education institutions and diverse population.

MEC encourages you to pass HB 1128 to ensure that Maryland can be a leader in emerging industries like AI, biotechnology, and cybersecurity. Please let us know if you have any questions or how we can be further helpful.

Letter to Senate Finance Committee - Talent Innova

Uploaded by: Khadejah Lovelace

Position: FAV

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**. I'd like to tell you a little bit about my life story as a way to illustrate why this bill is necessary.

I grew up with a great education as an honor roll student, however I didn't finish high school traditionally. Instead, I went to Job Corps to get my GED/HSD. It took almost 8 years later, to realize I wanted more for myself, but I didn't want to be in debt hundreds of thousands of dollars in my mid-twenties. After gaining a few skills along the way, I came across BCR Cyber. I took advantage of BCR Cyber's no-cost ICE-T program as a SNAP E&T recipient. I graduated from the program in 2019 with my CompTIA certifications and training. Shortly after, I worked for a Managed Services Provider in a contract position configuring laptops for distribution to schools. I then transitioned to full-time employment with BCR Cyber and have been with them for the last four years.

I'm now the Government Programs Manager at BCR Cyber and I wear many hats, but the most rewarding is being able to assist others gain a career in Cybersecurity. My employment with BCR Cyber allowed me to get off of SNAP/food stamps years ago, and I'm happy to say that I'm able to pay all of my bills myself, with enough money for my daughter and my own savings and investments.

Not only are IT/cybersecurity careers lucrative, they are essential. Most of what society uses on a day-to-day basis is technology based. Whether it's personal, enterprise, or government devices, they are all vulnerable to being compromised and it's necessary to have a well-trained cyber workforce.

In many ways, I think that my story illustrates why this bill is necessary. I've been able to succeed because of the public-private partnership between the State of Maryland's Department of Labor and BCR Cyber.

It's really tough to get into these jobs without training and experience and this program enabled me to get both. They met me where I was in life and provided the training that I needed to succeed.

There are over 31,000 cybersecurity job vacancies in Maryland alone. Truthfully, we don't have a chance to fill them if we don't scale up these efforts and enact bills like this one. Thousands more people like me who would benefit from expanding these programs.

We need to fill these jobs to build our economy equitably for all Marylanders and so that our state is more secure. Please give the Department of Labor the tools that they need to create these partnerships.

I ask you to please support House Bill 1128. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Khadejah Lovelace

Government Programs Manager, BCR Cyber

Letter to Senate Finance Committee - Talent Innova

Uploaded by: Michael Spector

Position: FAV

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**. Ensuring a strong talent pipeline to fill cyber placement requirements is critical not just to our company, but to the 25+ Maryland-based private industry companies that comprise our employer consortium. By supporting House Bill 1128, the State of Maryland will be able to provide a much-needed, readily available talent pipeline for the cyber industry in the state to utilize and remain competitive nationally. According to industry expert Cyberseek, Maryland has **31,000 vacancies right now** in cybersecurity. This bill would provide the necessary public-private partnerships to dramatically accelerate this much needed workforce as well as cutting edge industries and technology like quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and advanced manufacturing.

Working with Maryland's community colleges, the Maryland Department of Labor (MD DOL) and local employers, BCR Cyber's Cybersecurity Pathways Across Maryland / Employment Advancement Right Now Advanced Cyber Training (CPAM / EARN ACT) program has already trained over 1,000 unemployed / underemployed students over the last six years. The program has transitioned diverse and underserved students into family-sustaining wage IT and cyber careers. We are particularly proud that for BCR Cyber, we've helped to provide these career opportunities to a very diverse population - nearly 70% of our participants have been people of color in an industry that very much needs diversity. To compete across the region and nationally, however, we need to do more and that's why we need this legislation. To grow, attract, and retain cutting edge technologies like cyber, we need programs like the Talent Innovation Fund.

If enacted, this bill would help in the deployment of experiential learning systems like cyber range training simulators throughout Maryland to address the urgent and well-documented needs of Maryland's cyber workforce by serving several thousand students/job seekers per year. The Talent Innovation Fund provides an opportunity to scale programs like the CPAM / EARN ACT model by more than 16x by providing necessary funding to build the necessary infrastructure. The Talent Innovation Fund complements EARN funding by providing funding for infrastructure like cyber ranges. By statute, the EARN program, although very successful in workforce development, does not allow for funding of infrastructure. The proposed Talent Innovation Fund would provide funding for the infrastructure needed to bridge the cybersecurity workforce gap.

BCR Cyber appreciates the committee's consideration of this program. We believe that ensuring funding the Talent Innovation Fund will train workers with in-demand cyber skills and strengthen the cybersecurity workforce in Maryland. We would respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1128.

Sincerely,



Michael N. Spector
President, BCR Cyber

HB 1128 - MWA - FWA .pdf

Uploaded by: Brandon Butler

Position: FWA

MWA Members

Anne Arundel County
Anne Arundel Workforce
Development Corporation
Kirkland Murray, *Executive Director*

Baltimore City
Mayor's Office of Employment
Development
MacKenzie Garvin, *Director*

Baltimore County
Baltimore County Department of
Economic and Workforce
Development
Neishali Schyler, *MOA Ops.
Manager*

Carroll County
Carroll County Workforce
Development
Heather Lee Powell, *Manager*

Frederick County
Frederick County Workforce
Services
Michelle Day, *Director*

Howard County
Howard County Office of Workforce
Development
Francine Trout, *Director*

Lower Shore
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance
(Somerset, Wicomico, & Worcester,
Counties)
Leslie Porter-Cabell, *Workforce
Director*

Montgomery County WorkSource
Montgomery, Inc. Anthony
Featherstone, *Executive Director*

Prince George's County
Prince George's County Workforce
Development Board Walter
Simmons, *Executive Director*

Southern Maryland
Southern Maryland Job Source
(Calvert, Charles, & St. Mary's
Counties)
Ruthy Davis, *Director*

Susquehanna Region
Susquehanna Workforce Network,
Inc. (Cecil & Harford Counties)
Kimberly Justus, *Executive Director*

Upper Shore
Upper Shore Workforce Investment
Board (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent,
Queen Anne's, & Talbot Counties)
Dan Schneckenburger, *Executive
Director*

Western Maryland
Western Maryland Consortium
(Allegheny, Garrett &
Washington Counties)
Deborah Gilbert, *Executive Director*

February 28, 2024

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

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Maryland Workforce Association, an association of the 13 local workforce boards in Maryland, would like to express its **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** position on **House Bill 1128: Labor and Employment - Workforce Development - Talent Innovation Program and Funds**. While the Association supports the creation of the Talent Innovation Program and Fund, we respectfully request the bill be amended as follows:

On Pg. 4, Line 8-11:

(1) *Provide Grants*

(1) *To entities, including employers, LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS, institutions of higher education, tax exempt organizations, public agencies, and Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors, and residents of the State; and*

While some workforce boards are tax exempt organizations and others are public agencies, we believe the express inclusion of the local workforce development boards demonstrates the State's intention to invest public dollars in the State's public workforce system. Some local workforce development boards are tax exempt organizations, while others are public agencies; however, we believe that this amendment is aligned with the sponsor's intent. As such, we request a Favorable report of this measure, with the included amendment.

For any questions or comments regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact the Maryland Workforce Association's Executive Director Brandon Butler at mwaexecdirector@gmail.com or 240.434.5524.

Sincerely,



Kirkland Murray, *President*
Maryland Workforce Association

HB1128_MDL_Senate Letter of Support with Amendment

Uploaded by: Secretary Portia Wu

Position: FWA

Date: March 21, 2024
Committee: Senate Finance Committee
Bill Title: Talent Innovation Program and Fund
Re: **House Bill 1128 - FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Department of Labor is pleased to introduce House Bill 1128, which will create a Talent Innovation Program and Fund, with technical amendments to remove certain examples of talent financing mechanisms and to explicitly articulate local workforce development boards' eligibility as potential Fund awardees. We believe this legislation takes an innovative and strategic approach to building a strong workforce pipeline into emerging industry sectors. By creating a Fund that leverages private and philanthropic commitments, this legislation will unlock additional resources to serve as a force multiplier for our state's economic growth. Other jurisdictions, including Baltimore City, have established similar Funds that can more easily leverage resources and Maryland would benefit from establishing one to advance workforce needs across the state.

Workforce training in key industries is critical to supercharging Maryland's economy. Investing in our state's labor force is key to Maryland's economic competitiveness. There is high demand for skilled workers in health care, biotech manufacturing, sustainable infrastructure, and cybersecurity and information technology.¹ For example, there are currently thousands of unfilled cybersecurity jobs in Maryland and need in this field is projected to grow by as much as 20% for key cybersecurity occupations by 2030.² At the same time, although we are experiencing historic lows of unemployment,³ not all Marylanders are benefitting from the strong economy. Workers with a high school degree or below are unemployed at rates two to three times that of workers with a bachelor's degree.⁴ To drive greater economic growth we need to bring more Marylanders back into the labor force, and provide more workers with the skills needed to get good jobs in emerging industries.

HB 1128 would support innovative approaches to bring more Marylanders back into the labor force and grow emerging and strategic industry sectors. HB 1128 would enable the state to tap external funding resources for initiatives that more restrictive state or federal workforce development funds cannot support. This approach is particularly needed since

¹ Maryland WIOA Combined State Plan 2024-2028 (under review by the Governor's Workforce Development Board)

² Maryland WIOA Combined State Plan 2024-2028 (under review by the Governor's Workforce Development Board)

³ BLS. Unemployment Rates for States. 2024. <https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>

⁴ US Census Bureau. American Community Survey data. 2022. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2301?q=S2301:%20Employment%20Status&g=040XX00US24&moe=false>.



LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
45 Calvert Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
443-401-5129

workforce resources are going to decline given that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds have largely been obligated and Maryland's federal formula share is likely to decrease. While the Department has supported an appropriation in this year's budget for the program, it is independently important to establish the underlying program and fund - *even without a state appropriation* - because the program can receive and leverage outside resources.

In addition, the legislation provides that the Fund and Program would have the flexibility to invest in new solutions and different funding mechanisms that current programs cannot support, complementing Maryland's other workforce development efforts to improve our competitiveness in these emerging and growing industries.

Finally, the legislation contemplates a first pilot of the Talent Innovation Program, aimed at expanding regional cyber ranges, a recognized method for developing work-ready talent in the cybersecurity industry. Such capital investments could have a longer-term return since the ranges can be used for additional cohorts of learners after the pilot phase.

We know that bringing more Marylanders into the workforce, expanding access to good jobs, and growing our economy will take bigger and smarter investments in workforce training. This legislation seeks to unlock the state's ability to do just that and to tap into additional resources to propel our economy forward.

The Maryland Department of Labor requests a Favorable with amendments report from the Committee on House Bill 1128.