



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 27, 2025

Delegate C.T. Wilson, Chair  
Economic Matters Committee  
231 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: HB 501: Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 501, which would waive examination requirements for certain licenses and establish the Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development to market and advance the registered apprenticeship system throughout the State.

In today's rapidly changing world, it has become clear that four-year colleges are not the only path towards success for our young people. Decades ago, skilled trades were an essential pillar in our communities, but across the Nation, there is a growing shortage of skilled workers across industries. In fact, a recent survey by DEWALT showed that two-thirds of students enrolled in skilled trades programs are committed to the field, but 52% are waitlisted for technical or vocational programs. Unfortunately, training programs cannot keep up with the generational demand. Expanding and promoting workforce development opportunities will not only bolster Maryland's economy but provide practical and vital services to our communities and promote economic stability for workers.

In Howard County, we've not only recognized the importance of apprenticeships, but have actively set out to promote them with our community. Howard County's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) offers apprenticeship programs across a variety of sectors to help create a highly skilled workforce. Apprentices are able to earn as they learn skills, get college credit and certifications, acquire skills, and earn national credentials within industries without any education debt or loans. At the same time, businesses that partner with OWD benefit from increased retention of skilled employees, reduced turnover and access to local, federal, and state resources. Most simply, our local apprenticeship program allows businesses to fill vacant positions easily with a diverse field of qualified individuals who are ready to work.

I strongly believe that we must continue to prioritize young people through valuable workforce development initiatives. I believe that this bill, through the establishment of the Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development will promote and advance these critical programs for Marylanders. With that in mind, I request a favorable report.



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All the Best,

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