HB 956 - Consumer Protection – Workgroup on Artificial Intelligence Implementation
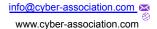**Senate Finance Committee**
March 18, 2025
Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Tasha Cornish, and I am the Executive Director of the Cybersecurity Association, Inc. (CA), a statewide, nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization dedicated to the growth and success of Maryland's cybersecurity industry. Established in 2015, CA represents over 600 businesses, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to independent operators, collectively employing nearly 100,000 Marylanders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **House Bill 956 – Consumer Protection – Workgroup on Artificial Intelligence Implementation**. This bill seeks to establish a workgroup to monitor and make recommendations regarding various issues related to artificial intelligence (AI) and consumer protection. The Cybersecurity Association, Inc. **supports HB 956 with an amendment** to ensure that Maryland's cybersecurity industry is represented in this important discussion.

Recommended Amendment: Add the Cybersecurity Association, Inc. to the Workgroup

- **Current Proposal:** The workgroup is composed of representatives from the Maryland Technology Council, e-commerce, biotechnology, real estate, health care, and education sectors, as well as government officials.
- **Concern:** AI-related cybersecurity risks are a **critical** aspect of AI regulation and consumer protection, yet **cybersecurity representation is missing** from the workgroup.
- **Recommended Change:** Amend **Section 3.5-807(B)** to **add 3 representatives from the Cybersecurity Association, Inc.** to ensure cybersecurity considerations are fully addressed in AI policy discussions.

Rationale for the Amendment

1. **AI and Cybersecurity Are Inextricably Linked**

   - AI-powered attacks are increasing in frequency and sophistication, with cybercriminals using AI for automated phishing, deepfake fraud, and AI-powered malware.
   - AI governance must account for these cybersecurity threats to protect Maryland's businesses, government, and consumers.

2. **Ensuring a Balanced Approach to AI Regulation**

   - The workgroup's responsibilities include monitoring private sector AI use, privacy protections, and consumer rights—all areas that directly intersect with cybersecurity.
   - Including cybersecurity expertise will ensure practical, enforceable recommendations that enhance security without stifling innovation.

3. **Protecting Maryland's Economy from AI-Driven Cyber Threats**

- Including cybersecurity industry representation in AI policymaking helps protect state infrastructure, businesses, and residents from evolving threats.

Conclusion

By incorporating this amendment, HB 956 will strengthen Maryland's AI regulatory framework by ensuring cybersecurity risks are fully addressed. This will help safeguard consumers, businesses, and state agencies as AI technologies continue to evolve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge a favorable report on HB 956 with the proposed amendment.

Sincerely,
Tasha Cornish
Executive Director
Cybersecurity Association, Inc.