



MARYLAND
Chamber of Commerce

LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 79

Maryland Technology Internship Program -- Qualifications for Participation-Alterations

House Appropriations Committee

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 4,500 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees and families. Part of that work includes support for sustainable solutions that drive Maryland's future economy, including education, talent pipeline, innovation and economic diversity.

House Bill 79 would alter the cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirement, from 3.0 to 2.0, that participants of the Maryland Technology Internship Program must maintain or have maintained in the past academic year to qualify for participation.

The Maryland Technology Internship Program is a critical component of a greater effort to ensure that Maryland cultivates a competitive workforce that is armed with the skills necessary to participate in the economy of the future. Although the program has proven its success, the shortage of qualified applicants threatens its long-term sustainability.

Many talented students miss out on this opportunity because their GPA is below 3.0 for any number of reasons. However, GPA is not an all-encompassing measurement of an individual's skills and/or knowledge. We believe that the current GPA requirement for the program is arbitrary, and that reducing it is necessary in order to sustain the program.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce supports any effort to establish or maintain a robust talent pipeline. The Chamber also supports any effort to expand economic diversity and inclusion. If passed, this bill would expand internship opportunities for a broader cross-section of Maryland students and ensure the long-term viability for the Maryland Technology Internship Program, a crucial component of building the next-generation workforce.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **Favorable Report** on HB 79.

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