

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh and the Honorable Tawanna Gaines

Members of the House Appropriations Committee

House Office Building Room 121

6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 79 Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP)

Stance: Support

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP) helps Maryland retain top talent by increasing the number of paid technical internships offered by employers in the state. MTIP officially launched in August 2018 and offers financial assistance to technology-based businesses, as well as state and local agencies, to hire more interns. Administered by UMBC and funded by the State of Maryland, the program aims to educate and encourage Maryland students to stay in the state of Maryland post-graduation and increase the awareness of technical employment opportunities in Maryland. To date, MTIP has funded 310 internships, within 198 unique organizations.

MTIP supported interns have come from 20 higher education institutions in Maryland and 11 out of state with the goal of retaining talented tech candidates for Maryland's future workforce. MTIP employers represent wide ranging tech industries that Maryland has to offer, from cyber security, advanced manufacturing, bio-tech and artificial intelligence to name a few.

- 85% of employers are businesses that are smaller than 150 employees (surpassing the original goal).

- 80% of organizations stated that MTIP funds helped them to create a new internship program.
- 75% of MTIP students indicated that they plan to stay in Maryland post-graduation for their first career.

However, with any program there is always room for improvement. MTIP has strict eligibility requirements for the interns and employers who can participate. 10% of students who submitted an application to MTIP on behalf of an employer were not eligible due to the GPA requirements of 3.0. Recent graduates and recently discharged veterans are also eligible to be MTIP-supported interns. The GPA requirement presents an equity issue and goes against the core purpose of this program, which is to keep technical talent in the state of Maryland. The reality of these technical courses is that one bad class can follow a student for a long time and is it fair to deny them an internship opportunity because of this? This opportunity can open so many doors for students and we know, hands on experiential learning makes more engaged full time employees. If we base all hiring solely on GPA, we would have no Microsoft or Apple as both of those entrepreneurs famously dropped out of college. We ask that you re-evaluate the program's GPA requirement to 2.5 aligning the program with the state's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

In addition to the GPA change, HB79 adds nonprofit employers as eligible for MTIP funding. According to Maryland Nonprofits, nonprofits employ 1 out of every 10 workers in the region. That's almost 650,000 workers in Maryland. Nonprofits in the region contribute over \$112.3 billion dollars per year to the economy through wages paid, retail and wholesale purchases, and professional service contracts, contributing 12.4 percent of the region's gross domestic product. Nonprofit organizations face particular challenges competing in the current

war for tech talent. Allowing nonprofits access to MTIP funding would help these organizations grow their workforce and positively contribute to Maryland communities. The need for tech talent in the nonprofit space is growing rapidly. We all know that technology has the power to make all organizations more efficient. Nonprofits would greatly benefit from strong technical talent who can innovate and move organizations forward for the greater good of Maryland's workforce.

The proposed amendments to the Maryland Technology Internship Program will help level the playing field for nonprofits, businesses and state and local agencies by enabling them to hire more Maryland students, and as a result will help us keep this talent in the state after graduation.

Sincerely,

Annie Weinschenk

Assistant Director

Maryland Technology Internship Program