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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the House Appropriations Committee In Support Of

House Bill 79

**Maryland Technology Internship Program –
Qualifications for Participation - Alterations**

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee:

"My advice for young people is, study what you love and intern in what you want to do."

*-Eva Chen
Director, Instagram*

Whatever your aspiration, an internship can be a vital first step on your chosen career path.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) operates the Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP), which helps Maryland retain top tech talent by increasing the number of paid technical internships offered in the state. On average, MTIP provides funding for 150-180 internships each year.

Too often, however, UMBC is forced to turn away talented applicants because their GPAs don't meet the 3.0 statutory requirement. Technology titans such as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, neither of whom earned high grades, are exemplars of this contradiction.¹ Furthermore, STEM students tend to have lower GPAs than students from other disciplines², and roughly 10% of MTIP applicants in 2019 possessed a GPA of lower than 3.0 and were rejected from the program because of it.

¹ Ilya Pozin, *Why Many "C" Students End Up Most Successful*, INC. MAGAZINE, April 16, 2016, <https://www.inc.com/ilya-pozin/why-many-students-with-bad-grades-end-up-successful.html>.

² Kevin Rask, "Attrition in STEM Fields at a Liberal Arts College: The Importance of Grades and Pre-Collegiate Preferences", *Digital Commons*, Cornell University's ILR School, March 2010.

As a result, the 3.0 GPA requirement creates barriers for numerous innovative Maryland organizations looking to improve their workforce by having interns. By lowering the GPA requirement from 3.0 to 2.5, House Bill 79 would expand MTIP's applicant pool and, thus, better ensure that all qualified candidates are being considered.

In addition to lowering the GPA requirement, House Bill 79 would expand the definition of "technology-based business" to include non-profit organizations as eligible MTIP employers. Under existing law, MTIP provides funding for for-profit organizations, as well as state and local agencies. However, it does not make sense to exclude non-profits, organizations which would most need funding assistance in order to employ interns.

STEM students passionate about service learning that benefits others should not be unable to partake in career-forwarding internships simply because that career is with a non-profit organization. House Bill 79 would rectify this incongruity.

Finally, the Baltimore Collegetown Network (BCN), a non-profit organization whose mission is to "attract, engage, and retain students, raise the profile of Baltimore as a college destination, and help colleges share resources," surveys its 160,000 students every three years.³ According to BCN's 2018 survey, only 36% of BCN students responded "definitely likely" in response to the question, "*How likely are you to stay in Baltimore after you graduate?*" Additionally, students report access to a job after graduation as the number one factor that will determine whether or not they stay.

By lowering the GPA requirement from 3.0 to 2.5 and expanding the definition of "technology-based business" to include non-profit organizations, House Bill 79 would provide more diverse internship opportunities to the most qualified candidates and, thus, provide a boon to the Maryland business community by keeping the best Baltimore graduates in Maryland.

While this committee has already approved lowering the GPA standards of MTIP by voting favorably on last session's version of this bill (HB1237 – 2019), HB 79 is different because it expands the definition of "technology-based business" to include non-profit organizations.

I respectfully urge the Committee to give House Bill 79 a favorable report.

³ <https://baltimorecollegetown.org/about-us/our-organization/index.html>