

February 27, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3E
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for Senate Bill 795 (Youth Apprenticeship 2.0 Act of 2020)

Dear Chairwoman Kelley:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, supports Senate Bill 795 (Youth Apprenticeship 2.0 Act of 2020).

This measure establishes an apprenticeship program for high school students through the Maryland Department of Labor. This program could help workforce shortage occupations like construction and development, which are currently facing a labor shortage. Many workers left the industry during the recession, and never returned. With a limited market, the cost of labor increases, which must be built into the price of the home, which increases housing costs.

Compounding this problem, a whole generation of younger workers is no longer considering residential/commercial construction as a viable career path. Many high schools have phased out shop classes, so students who might be interested in learning a trade no longer have the opportunity to do so. As older workers are retiring, no one is available to take their spots. Home building slows without a strong labor force, keeping families from building strong communities and stunting economic progress in the State.

This measure encourages students to learn useful trades, helps them enter the job market and earn a sustainable income, and contribute to the economic development of the State.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Senate Finance Committee Members