



House Ways and Means Committee

March 10, 2020

**House Bill 1585 – Economic Development – Maryland E-Innovation Initiative Program
Extension and Alterations
Support**

During the 2014 Legislative Session *SB601/HB741 – Business and Economic Development – Maryland E-Innovation Initiative Program* was passed into law. The Maryland E-Innovation Initiative Program was created to spur basic and applied research in scientific and technical fields at Maryland colleges and universities by matching private donations with grants from the Maryland Department of Commerce to create endowed chairs in select fields.

The purpose and intent of the Program is to retain and recruit top university researchers and encourage collaboration among Maryland research universities, federal agencies and the private sector (especially entrepreneurial companies).

The combination of top talent and collaboration enhances the economic competitiveness of the State as it builds on existing clusters of research and innovation. The program gives Maryland a tremendous advantage in the intense global competition for the best minds in the world, and provides for opportunities, jobs and industries created by their work.

The program also has proved to be tremendously successful in leveraging the impact of State funds through matching funds from private donors to universities. This success has been statewide and has included campuses as diverse as Washington College, University of Maryland Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the College of Southern Maryland and the University of Maryland. The program has been fully subscribed each year of its existence.

The original legislation had a five-year sunset, and we are seeking to extend the program for another five years, as well as increase funding (if available) to \$12.5 million from the current \$8.5 million. HB 1585 also makes a technical change to the language regarding the work requirement outside of campus to 20% of the year from one day a week. Finally, the bill as introduced would allow some portion of E-Innovation funds to be used in start-up packages to help recruit top academic talent.

The breadth of applicants and the stature of the awardees provide Maryland with a depth of experience that will advance the State's competitive advantage. For all of these reasons we urge a favorable report.