

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE****March 1, 2021****TESTIMONY****Submitted by****Kelly A. Koermer, J.D., MCCACET President****HB 905 – Education – Workforce Development Sequence Scholarships- Eligibility****Position: Oppose**

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I am testifying on behalf of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges Continuing Education and Training affinity group in opposition to House Bill 905. HB 905 Seeks to expand eligibility for Workforce Development Sequence scholarship funds beyond community colleges to those enrolled directly in a Registered Apprenticeship Program. If passed, this bill will dilute the already meager funds allotted for workforce development in community colleges, including that already allocated for related education that community colleges currently provide for registered apprenticeship partners. The proposed legislation will shift funding to the private sector which is already well-funded.

The legislation, as it stands today, supports related instruction offered by a community college for registered apprenticeship programs. Maryland's community colleges recognize the importance of apprenticeships and presently offer 42 programs for related instruction for registered apprenticeship partners across 23 different industries ranging from trades to biotech, to emergency management.

Registered apprenticeship programs are already well-funded. Each year the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC) in the Maryland Department of Labor receives money from the Federal government through the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant. Under the Maryland's State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant, Maryland Department of Labor is planning to allocate \$3,260,857 to increase business participation in Registered Apprenticeships by creating an Employer Incentive Plan (EIP). There is an additional \$750,000 planned to help community college's grow apprenticeships as well. Quite simply, apprenticeship as a method of developing the workforce is already well-funded in the State of Maryland. Therefore, it is unnecessary and unwise to redirect workforce development sequence funds away from non-apprenticeship workforce development programs to private apprenticeship programs.

Under the current law, the Maryland Higher Education equitably administers \$1,000,000 in workforce sequence funding to Maryland's community colleges and its students based upon enrollment formulas. The proposed legislation does not provide a mechanism for equitable distribution of funds to fairly impact residents across the State of Maryland. For example, there are 168 active apprenticeship programs approved in the State of Maryland. There are just 16 community colleges. If the \$1,000,000 currently allocated in workforce sequence funds was allocated equally across all 184 eligible entities, each entity's total student body would have access to just over \$5000 in support.

Community college workforce students would be significantly disadvantaged simply because 16 community colleges do not represent a sufficient market share to meaningfully access the \$1,000,000 in workforce sequence funds if distributed across a wider base. Furthermore, students pursuing workforce training in industries for which local apprenticeships are unavailable would have less funding and less opportunities. This will make it even more difficult to prepare qualified workers in industries in which high demand exists now and is projected well into the future, such as healthcare and cybersecurity careers.

For these reasons we ask you to support diverse workforce training programs for all Maryland residents by voting against House Bill 905.