



February 23, 2021
Members of the House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building Room 121
6 Bladen Street,
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 1215

Stance: Support

Madam Chairman, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

As Assistant Director of Applied Learning and Community Engagement in The Shriver Center at UMBC, I am writing to express my support and enthusiasm for HB125. In my role, I am directly responsible for the management of four paid internship programs, including those under the Walter Sondheim Jr. Maryland Public Service Internship Scholarship Program legislation. These paid internship programs give college students from across Maryland, and at every Maryland institution, the opportunity to intern full-time in the summer while participating in supplemental professional and leadership development opportunities. The programs have helped launch the careers of many of Maryland's current nonprofit and government leaders.

The Maryland Opportunities Program as laid out in HB 1215 will directly expand opportunities for college students to participate in paid internship experiences. There is an urgent need for these opportunities which will provide an important pipeline to strengthen Maryland's workforce and combat race-based, gender, and economic inequities.

The Maryland Opportunities Program will strengthen Maryland's workforce. The Maryland Opportunities Program will benefit Maryland by providing career direct career pathways for students to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their academic programs to boost Maryland businesses' and organizations' abilities to meet their goals. Students will be exposed to careers, employers, systems, and networks that are rooted in Maryland, which help retain the student in-state for future careers.

In my work, I often encounter businesses and organizations who would deeply benefit from having an intern. However, many of them are bound by both financial constraints and personal or organizational ethics that prevent them from hosting un-paid interns. The Maryland Opportunities Program will provide significant benefits to these businesses and organizations.

The Maryland Opportunities Program will combat race-based inequity and narrow the gender pay gap. The Maryland Opportunities Program will advance equity in the state by increasing opportunities for paid internships. In her article "*How Unpaid Internships Undermine Diversity & Inclusion Efforts*", Jyarland Daniels states unpaid internships "**disadvantage women through the overrepresentation of women in non-paying positions; racial minorities and students from low-middle class families are disadvantaged through their exclusion.**"

There are widening disparities among students who work at unpaid versus paid internships based on their race, gender and parents' education, and for students who do not participate in any internship. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) analyzed data from its 2019 Student Survey Report and specifically looked at the internship experiences of 3,952 seniors who graduated in spring of 2019. Though Black students made up 6.6 percent of the graduating students, they held only 6 percent of paid internships and 7.3 percent of unpaid internships, a press release about the analysis said. Hispanic and Latino students in the Class of 2019 were more likely than any other racial group to have had no internship by graduation.

Women occupy 3 out of 4 unpaid internships. Additionally, majors in fields dominated by women (education, social sciences, humanities, etc.) report the most unpaid internships. NACE reports that those with unpaid internships had a first-position salary \$3,494/year lower than those with both paid and unpaid internships and \$8,097/year lower than those with all paid internships. The Maryland Opportunities Program would help narrow the gender pay gap by providing students in non-technical fields the opportunity to be paid during their internship experience, thus increasing access to paid internship opportunities available to women in those fields and leading to higher initial wages.

HB1215 expands access to experiential learning opportunities for all students across the state of Maryland and in doing so helps reduce disparities across race, gender, and socioeconomics. It provides a true pathway to hire and retain the next generation of talent for the state of Maryland. Please support HB1215.

Sincerely,



Hannah Schmitz
Assistant Director
Applied Learning & Community Engagement
Public Service Scholars Programs
The Shriver Center
UMBC - University of Maryland, Baltimore County
hannahs@umbc.edu