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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the House Appropriations Committee

In Support of

House Bill 307

Maryland Technology Internship Program - Qualifications for Participation - Alterations

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

*-Eva Chen
Director, Instagram*

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

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

The Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP), 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, the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), which operates the program, 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 disciplines.² Roughly 10% of MTIP applicants in 2019 had 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 307 would expand MTIP's applicant pool and enable all qualified candidates to be considered.

In addition to lowering the GPA requirement, HB 307 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-profit 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 307 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 307 would provide more diverse internship opportunities to the most qualified candidates and a boon to the Maryland business community by keeping the best Baltimore graduates in Maryland.

This bill is identical to House Bill 79 (2020), which this committee acted favorably on and the House of Delegates passed unanimously.

I respectfully urge the Committee to give House Bill 307 a favorable report.

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