

MARYLAND WORKFORCE ALLIANCE



Date: March 09, 2021
Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
Legislation: Testimony on SB 668 Good Job Opportunities for High School Graduates Act of 2021
Position: Support

Good Afternoon Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee. My name is Joseph DeMattos, and I serve as Chair of the Maryland Workforce Alliance. The Maryland Workforce Alliance is a coalition of 35 trade associations, labor unions and apprenticeship providers that have come together to support common sense workforce legislation. The Maryland Workforce Alliance unites trade associations, unions, and nonprofits to promote a world-class workforce in Maryland. We endeavor to bridge the skills gap and address critical employment shortages in key fields and to forge pathways that connect employers, apprenticeship sponsors, and job seekers.

The Maryland Workforce Alliance works for the creation of jobs in markets experiencing labor shortages through career and technical education in public schools, certificate programs in community colleges, youth apprenticeship programs and registered apprenticeship programs. MWA's work ensures there is increased engagement in the development and execution of workforce skills training programs. We believe this bill elevates workforce skills training programs and makes available equal access to students interested in workforce training as is made available for college readiness. This bill will require school systems to provide opportunity for students to share their Naviance results with apprenticeship sponsors and employers registered with the Maryland Department of Labor or a local workforce board. This requirement has the opportunity to improve access and improve participation in workforce readiness programs. This bill will also require schools to provide equal visibility and access to apprenticeship sponsors and employers as they do for colleges and thereby allowing schools to reach more students and improving on communication and access to training and employment opportunities.

The Maryland Workforce Alliance is pleased with the requirement found in this bill to require school systems which pay for fees to take AP, PSAT, or SAT tests, to pay fees for skills credential and apprenticeship entrance exams. The bill also alters the purposes of the existing CTE Innovation Grant program. for fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, to provide grants of \$100,000 to each local workforce board to (1) implement an Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Results Partnership, as specified in the bill or; (2) create a system to release a student's personal information and ASVAB scores to specified apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs. The Maryland Workforce Alliance finds the requirements of this bill align with our mission to create additional pathway to connect more youth with the training and

skills needed to be career ready and ultimately expand employment opportunities and increase income for Marylanders.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage this Committee to vote favorably on SB 668.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph DeMattos,
Chair, Maryland Workforce Alliance.