



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Senate Bill 902 – Cyber Workforce Program and Fund
March 12, 2021
Urging a Favorable Report

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and members of the committee, for the record I am Tom Sadowski, Vice Chancellor for Economic Development with the University System of Maryland (USM), and I respectfully request your favorable review and report on Senate Bill 902.

Senate Bill 902 will establish the Cyber Workforce Program within the Maryland Department of Commerce Partnership for Workforce Quality Program. In doing so, the Cyber Workforce Program will leverage existing program infrastructure, building on current educational and workforce training assets in the state. Utilizing federally awarded workforce development funds to create the Cyber Workforce Grant Fund, Senate Bill 902 will also provide the resources necessary to support the urgent and growing talent needs of our government and industry employers in the cybersecurity sector throughout Maryland. Most importantly, Senate Bill 902 creates the framework for industry-driven input, collaboration and leadership in the development and execution of a strategic, inclusive, and sustainable workforce development strategy for Maryland.

More than 22,000 cybersecurity jobs remain unfilled in Maryland, and this does not include cyber positions embedded within other industry sectors. These vacancies create security vulnerabilities in our economy, making our critical infrastructure and essential services more vulnerable to attack, because we currently do not have applicant pools with the right skills to fill open positions. Eighty percent of open cyber positions nationally, require a bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree— but also require on average five years of technical experience. At present, the USM awards 12,000 STEM degrees each year— 7,500 of which are cybersecurity related. Senate Bill 902 will help the USM and other higher education institutions throughout Maryland provide not only the academic credentials but also help deliver the technical experience— via internships, apprenticeships and otherwise.

That will give our students, graduates, the unemployed, underemployed, and life-long learners alike, the industry certified training and credentials required to enter the workforce and satisfy immediate employer talent needs.

By supporting Senate Bill 902 and the creation of the Cyber Workforce Program, you will make possible the training of a broad and diverse population of Marylanders, thus enabling them to secure valuable, family-supporting jobs with high growth potential. Simply put, Senate Bill 902 will help to facilitate the industry leadership, technical training, and resources necessary to best equip current and prospective Maryland students, graduates,

and residents for jobs that defend our critical infrastructure, secure our intellectual property, and protect delivery of essential services for the benefit of Maryland's economy and quality of life of its citizens going forward.

Again, the USM urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 902.

