



Senator Delores G. Kelly, Chair
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
Finance Committee

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee

March 12, 2021

On behalf of the Fort Meade Alliance Board of Director I urge you to support Senate Bill (SB) 902 to establish the Cyber Workforce Program in the Partnership for Workforce Quality Program. The Cyber Workforce Program will leverage existing infrastructure in the Department of Commerce and will build on current educational programs and workforce training assets in the state. Utilizing federally awarded workforce development funds to create the Cyber Workforce Grant Fund, this Bill will provide the necessary resources to support the urgent and growing cybersecurity needs across Maryland. Fundamentally, SB 902 creates the framework for industry-driven input and collaboration in the development and execution of Maryland's workforce development strategy.

The Fort Meade Alliance (FMA) is a 501c4 nonprofit with a central mission to support and promote Fort George G. Meade (FGGM) as an economic asset and resource to the region. We play a critical role as a leader in the community, championing and facilitating Fort Meade regional initiatives to remain the first choice for military services, civilian support services and federal departments and agencies. Our frequent interaction with FGGM leadership, the more than 115 government agencies and organizations on Fort Meade and elected government officials demonstrates the Alliance's strength.

On any given day, there are more than 22,000 unfilled cybersecurity jobs in Maryland, and this doesn't include cyber positions embedded in other industries. These vacancies create security vulnerabilities in our critical infrastructure and essential services, but we don't have applicant pools with the right skills to fill our open positions.

Our membership consists of over 250 business members representing over 100,000 employees in the region. Many of these businesses represent cybersecurity and information technology (CS/IT) companies that recognize the importance of developing and recruiting talent at a young age. Troubled by the persistent shortage of skilled cyber security workers, the Fort Meade Alliance last year assembled a group of high-level representatives from business, government and educational organizations to identify key obstacles limiting the expansion of the CS/IT workforce and begin working towards solutions. SB 902 is a program that can address these critical workforce needs.

By supporting and investing in this Bill and the Cyber Workforce Program, you will train Marylanders for good paying jobs with high growth potential. Simply put, Senate Bill 902 can put people to work and be the economic driver we need, especially as Maryland recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

I hope I can count on you to support this critical legislation.

Sincerely,



Doreen Harwood
President Fort Meade Alliance