

Senate Finance Committee***Senate Bill 444 (West) Transforming Manufacturing in a Digital Economy Workgroup
(Making it in Maryland)*****Sara C. Fidler, President**sfidler@micua.org**February 16, 2021**

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of ***Senate Bill 444 (West) Transforming Manufacturing in a Digital Economy Workgroup (Making it in Maryland)***. This bill establishes a workgroup to facilitate the State's entry into Industry 4.0 technology to improve the perception of manufacturing careers. The workgroup is charged with examining a wide range of issues including higher education curricula, professional research, public-private partnerships, State grants, new tax credits, and the State's current statutory and regulatory authority over manufacturing.

MICUA appreciates having representation on this workgroup and looks forward to supporting its efforts. Our member colleges and universities have been at the forefront of developing curricula, preparing the workforce, and bringing to bear nationally acclaimed research for the information-driven economy. It is a source of pride that we are developing the thoughtful, creative, intuitive and responsible leaders needed to take us into the Industry 4.0 era. One related example is in our preparation of cybersecurity professionals. Five MICUA member institutions have approved cybersecurity programs at the certificate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral levels: Capitol Technology University, Hood College, Johns Hopkins University, Mount St. Mary's University, and Stevenson University.

For many years, the demand for highly skilled cybersecurity workers in Maryland was fueled by Maryland's robust defense and intelligence industry, which includes numerous federal agencies, military bases, and defense contractors. More recently, this demand is fueled by the need to guard essential services, such as electric grids, banking systems, hospitals, correctional facilities, private sector business activities, and more. As a result, Maryland is experiencing a severe shortage of highly trained professionals to protect the integrity of data, communications, and intellectual property. The experience of MICUA institutions in addressing these issues will prove to be a valuable asset to this workgroup. We look forward to participating.

MICUA urges a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 444.