



House Bill 24

Cybersecurity Scholarship Program – Alterations and Maryland Cybersecurity Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Establishment

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: January 25, 2022

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 24. This bill would incentivize cybersecurity professionals to seek employment with county government at a time when local governments are increasingly threatened with cyber-attacks and counties rely on experts to secure systems and maintain operations.

HB 24 creates a pathway for cybersecurity professionals to pursue careers with local government in two ways: by requiring that the number of years of scholarship be equivalent to time spent working in public service, and through establishing a student loan repayment assistance program for cybersecurity staff employed in local government. The bill specifies that eligible service includes employment with a local education agency, public high school, public institution of higher education, community college, or unit of state government, county government, or city or municipal government.

Furthermore, HB 24 smartly develops partnerships between high school career and technology programs and the Cybersecurity Scholarship Program, encouraging students to remain in Maryland with in-state tuition and to pursue studies in cybersecurity. Importantly, HB 24 recognizes community colleges as a critical piece of Maryland's higher education infrastructure, and therefore eligible to participate in these programs – potentially as a major contributor.

County government relies on secure and stable cyber and technological programs to successfully deliver services to the communities they serve. HB 24 helps develop cybersecurity experts by leveraging our local institutions of higher education and creating a direct track to work in the field with local governments. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 24 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.