

January 27, 2022

Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Mark S. Chang, Vice-Chair
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 255

Stance: Support

Madam Chairman, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am the executive director of Baltimore Homecoming, a small nonprofit launched in 2017 to build a network of accomplished Baltimoreans from across the U.S. to spark new partnerships, collaborations, investments, and philanthropy. Our work is centered around building relationships with local changemakers, the civic community, and the Baltimore expat community. We are a small organization of 2 full time staff backed by a committed 8-person board doing work typically done by teams staffed by many development professionals. In the last few years, we've hosted several interns who have added immense measurable capacity to our work.

Small local organizations, which often rely on interns and volunteers, have been hit especially hard by COVID-19 and the current economy. As our board asked us to cut non-critical expenses from our 2020-2021 budget, we expended countless staff hours to defend that our intern stipend line item as a critical cost – critical to providing our organization the bandwidth it needs to achieve our mission and critical to make our internship opportunity equitable and accessible to students by removing financial barriers. While budget constraints create challenges with recruiting interns, offering compensation incentivizes student candidates, especially students those in arts & humanities, to pursue enriching non-traditional roles like with startups and social enterprises. HB0255 can help lift these crucial sectors in our region, while helping students gain access to career-building opportunities.

A tax credit could also incentivize employers to retain their entry level talent. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) shared that employers converted 55.5% of their interns from the Class of 2019 into full-time, entry-level hires. Results from a NACE study of student attitudes, behaviors, and preferences suggest that interns who were satisfied with their internship experience were 5.08 times more likely to accept an offer from their internship employer.

HB0255 expands access to experiential learning opportunities for students and supports organizations across the state of Maryland. It provides a true pathway to hire and retain the next generation of talent for the state of Maryland. Please support HB0255.

Sincerely,

Robbin Lee

Executive Director – Baltimore Homecoming, Inc.
robbin@baltimorehomecoming.com
301.512.6971