



CARE BRAVELY

HB443 – Maryland Corps Program - Revisions

House Appropriations Committee – February 8, 2022

Testimony of Martha D. Nathanson, Esq., Vice President, Government Relations and Community Development LifeBridge Health

Position: **SUPPORT**

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB443. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County, and; Grace Medical Center in Baltimore (formerly Bon Secours Hospital).

As the anchor institution in Northwest area of Baltimore City and County, we strongly support the intent of HB443 to build new pathways to service through scaling up service slots, including facilitating ways for large-scale employers to offer service year opportunities. In turn, these service opportunities can serve as pathways to employment throughout our communities, including at anchor institutions such as LifeBridge Health facilities. In addition, the program provides small community employers an opportunity to host participants, contributing to economic stability of these businesses and to economic growth of the communities they serve.

SB228 ensures that individuals who are currently unable to participate in existing programs, many of whom would benefit the most from taking part in a service year, can serve through Maryland Corps funded programs. Providing the equivalent of a \$15 an hour stipend, health insurance, and the potential for wraparound services such as childcare, transportation, housing, mental health service, financial literacy programming, and college and career application support will reduce barriers to entry for participants. A matching fund for large-scale employers will incentivize institutions like hospitals, universities, and other private sector employers to create service slots to meet growing workforce needs.

LifeBridge Health is a unique major healthcare institution in that it maintains a dedicated team solely focused on community development and social determinants of health, valuing educational outcomes, building a strong business environment, and creating workforce development opportunities as paths to better health and revitalization in the communities we serve. From our Skill Building programs such as Digital Literacy, Bridge to College and School at Work Program, our Job Training programs such as Central Sterile Processing, CNA, LPN to our Health Careers Academies in Randallstown and Pimlico, we actively build the workforce of the future, and the Maryland Corps goals dovetail with these types of efforts and support workforce development in our communities.

For all the above stated reasons, we request a **FAVORABLE** report for HB443.

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