



**Testimony**

**Dr. Sanjay Rai, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs**

**Montgomery College**

**HB 1334 – Labor and Employment – Workforce Development - Cybersecurity**

**House Appropriations Committee**

**Favorable with Amendments**

**March 10, 2022**

Montgomery College supports this important legislation to establish a Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County with the addition of amendments to affirm the role and the participation of Maryland’s community colleges in this very important endeavor.

Maryland has become one of the epicenters for cybersecurity companies and jobs in our nation. These important jobs—defending our nation’s critical infrastructure, securing our banking and finance industry, and supporting the various federal and state agencies whose missions include protecting of nation’s most sensitive information—are essential to how we conduct our daily lives. Yet, many companies find it difficult to recruit and hire for these positions—severe workforce shortages exist in this discipline. The Maryland Department of Labor says these types of jobs will grow by almost 32 percent by 2024.

Clearly, Maryland needs to increase the capacity of the talent pipeline in this important discipline. We must grow and diversify this workforce. Community colleges including MC—a designated National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—are ready to help lead such an effort. Additionally, cybersecurity jobs cross every single industry sector and level, making the effort to close the workforce gaps even more complex. As a result, a comprehensive effort to create the skilled talent needed in Maryland is more important than ever to secure our state and our country.

Cyber jobs also require a range of credentials from certificates to baccalaureate degrees and more, which also adds to the challenge of closing this gap—while opening doors for Marylanders. As a result, it will take all of Maryland’s institutions of higher education to tackle this challenge and the legislation as drafted assumes as much. However, we believe it is imperative to name community colleges in the legislation to ensure the Accelerator takes advantage of community college students, faculty, staff, and facilities like the cyber labs at MC.

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Community colleges open doors to opportunity with training and education necessary to succeed in a cyber-job or transfer. Community colleges serve as the fulcrum between the public schools and the four-year schools—and the workforce.

As many know, to respond to this need, Maryland’s community colleges have formed collaborations—initiated with United States Department of Labor grants—among their cybersecurity programs. These collaborations helped develop an easily-navigable statewide career pathway system that actively engages industry and features on-ramps to training and off-ramps to good jobs for workers of all educational and skills levels.

To build on this model and to share the talent that has evolved from the community college collaborations, we ask the Committee to support the following amendments to the newly established Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator Program that will include community colleges:

On page 5 after line, 24 add:

NEW (9) \$500,000 TO MARYLAND’S COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ENTERING THE CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE IN THE STATE.

On page 1 at line 24, change to:

(B) THERE IS A CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE ACCELERATOR PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY *THAT INCLUDES COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRESENTATION*

Maryland’s community colleges are critical to closing the skill gaps in cybersecurity and getting these jobs filled with Marylanders anxious to step on the first rung of the ladder of opportunity.

Please adopt this legislation with the proposed amendments.

Thank you.