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Committee

Chair

Government Operations and  
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House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,  
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I.  
Rosenberg Before the House  
Appropriations Committee In Support Of  
**House Bill 443**  
**Maryland Corps Program - Revisions**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Nearly 40% of college freshmen do not complete a bachelor's degree within six years. Only 13% of students who come from families from the lowest income quintile graduate.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic has weakened both college enrollment and graduation, particularly among Asian and African American teenagers.<sup>2</sup> Students that take time off to work and engage in community service perform better than would be expected based on high school performance.<sup>3</sup> Students who take a service year "will frequently be more mature, more focused, and more aware of what they want to do with their college education," according to Bob Clagett, former Dean at Middlebury College.

Civil public service has been a hallmark of American society and its citizens since the RedCross was founded in Washington DC in 1881. Currently, a countless number of public service organizations, both domestic and foreign, provide health, education, and workforce development services.

***The primary objectives of SB 228/HB 443 are as follows:***

1. Creating and funding a quasi-public agency focused on coordinating service opportunities that match 21st century needs of participants and communities;
2. Removing barriers to entry so those who would benefit most from service years have the ability to participate in the program; and
3. Building new pathways to service through scaling up service slots with existing

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhorn/2020/08/11/new-york-fed-researchers-wrong-about-gap-years/?sh=32fe666a4f2b>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/26/americans-are-divided-on-whether-colleges-that-brought-students-back-to-campus-made-the-right-decision/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://collegeadmissionbook.com/blog/bob-clagett-taking-gap-year>

organizations, incentivizing large-scale employers to offer service year opportunities, and building opportunities within State and local government.

House Bill 443 would incentivize service opportunities in businesses, hospitals, and related industries. It removes barriers to service by providing funds and services to participants. This legislation would attract talented young people to the state and entice others to stay here and be part of the work force, by offering in-state tuition to students who perform a service year.

Under HB 443, the Maryland Corps board will be able to partner with AmeriCorps and other national and regional organizations to find opportunities and to attract service minded young people from around the nation.

I urge the Committee to act favorably on House Bill 443.

February 8, 2022