

KATIE FRY HESTER
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Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB478 - Career and Technical Education Committee – Alterations

February 16th, 2022

Thank you Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee for your consideration of SB478, which aims to further support the Career and Technical Education components of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

In Maryland, the average graduate from a four-year university will incur over \$40,000 of student debt. This is a significant impediment for our students as they enter the job market, and decreases their ability to afford housing, transportation, and other necessary expenditures. Career and technical education provides an alternative which results in lower amounts of student debt and competitive wages in fields that are desperate for talent such as auto-mechanics, HVAC, and culinary arts. In order to provide our students the greatest chance of future success, we must provide them the information they need to consider every possible career trajectory – not just those that require a four-year degree.

SB 478 does two things. First, it will add representatives of skilled trade organizations and career schools to the Career and Technical Education Committee. As the main providers of this education to students, representatives from career schools and skilled trade organizations have extensive knowledge about existing CTE programs and how best to market them. By including these essential perspectives, SB478 would improve the Committee's ability to carry out its goals of advancing CTE in Maryland and maintaining our diversified and modern economy.

Second, it will require guidance counselors and school systems to provide information on opportunities offered by career schools and skilled trade organizations to our students by May 1 their junior year and by October 1 of their senior year. I have also requested a sponsor amendment for the committee's consideration to establish a reporting requirement for local boards of education to ensure compliance with the statute.

In closing, this bill would ensure that high school students are provided access to high-quality information about career and technical education. **For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable with amendment report on SB478.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Carroll and Howard Counties