



SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY

**Submitted by
Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Community Colleges**

February 9, 2022

**SB 4 – Cybersecurity Scholarship Program – Alterations and Maryland Cybersecurity Loan Assistance
Repayment Program - enhancement**

Position: Support

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges ("MACC") representing Maryland's sixteen community colleges supports Senate Bill 4 and thanks Senator Hester for her sponsorship. Enactment of this legislation expands the current Cybersecurity Scholarship Program to permit part-time students to receive this award and to receive the award for a longer period of time. In addition, the legislation seeks to assist our institutions in obtaining trained cybersecurity personal by amending the Loan Assistance Repayment Plan to allow awardees to fulfill their service requirement by working for a community college.

Approximately seventy percent of community college students attend on a part-time basis, making the expansion of this scholarship a valuable resource. A large portion of community college students are primary caregivers with household responsibilities that do not permit them to attend a postsecondary institution on a full-time basis. Because these students are working and supporting families, they often do not qualify for need-based financial aid. Yet, it is this demographic of students that needs financial assistance to enter or continue postsecondary education. As a high demand field, cybersecurity credentials lead to high paying jobs. The expansion of this scholarship will enable many more students with limited resources to obtain cybersecurity credentials.

Between 2017 to 2020, Maryland posted 233,906 IT job openings. Senate Bill 4 seeks to fill the growing demand for Cybersecurity professionals by providing these students with incentive-based scholarships that also provides an affordable repayment plan. Senate Bill 4 provides a significant opportunity to expand equitable access to Cybersecurity training and education which will result in good paying, career opportunities within the Cybersecurity job market. This market continues to expand, especially in the government sector. Employment within this sector can change the lives of many disadvantaged students, and with better employment, comes greater tax revenue.