SB753
Labor and Employment - Workforce Development - Cybersecurity
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POSITION: FAVORABLE
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Good afternoon Madam Chairperson, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 753. I want to thank Senator Hester for putting this important bill forward and working so hard on this legislation.

My name is Annie Weinschenk and I have the privilege of administering the The Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP) on behalf of the state of Maryland. MTIP provides financial reimbursement in the form of matching funds to employers across the state of Maryland to increase the number of paid, technical internships and to keep technical talent in the state. SB753 would allocate increased funding to support paid technical internships in the realm of cybersecurity, data science, AI and machine learning.

Over the last three years, MTIP has supported nearly 800 interns at 250 organizations across the region. Each year, the demand for MTIP funds exceeds our current allocated budget. MTIP runs lean and efficiently, providing $270,000 directly back to employers in matching intern funds each year. Cyber security organizations represent 40% of participating employers in the program. SB753 will increase students' exposure to careers, employers, systems, and networks that are rooted in Maryland, which help retain the student talent in-state for future careers.

You may be asking yourselves, why does a tech company need financial support in order to host interns. I would argue that many small businesses, start-ups and state and local agencies do not have the resources necessary to support internship programs compared to large scale tech focused companies. These firms do not have full-time campus recruiting personnel, may not be able to offer competitive pay, or possess "brand name" recognition with students. However, these organizations are able to provide experiences that are vital to student development and a skilled workforce.

Increased MTIP funding will offset the growing workforce gaps in cybersecurity and support the state's diversity and inclusion efforts.

- The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) analyzed data from its 2019 Student Survey Report and specifically looked at the internship experiences of nearly 4,000 seniors who graduated in spring of 2019.
    - NACE's research showed that Black students are overrepresented in unpaid internships, accounting for 7.3%.
    - Hispanic and Latino students in the same study were more likely than any other racial group to have had no internship by graduation.

The days of interns getting coffee or handling small, administrative tasks are over. The national average and competitive hourly rate for a bachelor's level intern is close to $20 an hour. If we want to support our emerging companies and public service sectors with technical student talent then we need to compete with these wages. By expanding MTIP funding you will be supporting increased, paid, technical internships in Maryland.

The Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator would provide an infusion of resources to impactful training programs and will help remove barriers to build a skilled and diverse cybersecurity talent pipeline. I urge you to vote favorable for SB753 and thank you for your time. I'd be happy to answer any questions about MTIP.