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BILL NO.: **HB 546**

TITLE: Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

SPONSOR: The Speaker (By Request – Administration)

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 21, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 546 – Education – Service Year Option Program – Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023). This legislation would establish the Service Year Option program to support graduates interested in the public service field.

The COVID pandemic highlighted the need for critical investments to be made to cultivate a strong and efficient public service field. States and local jurisdictions across the country are suffering from a dwindling pool of applicants who are trained for critical high-impact service placements. Enhanced workforce development tools that provide targeted, specialized training as alternatives to postsecondary education are vital for strengthening the pipeline of talent into State and Local government positions.

HB 546 provides the State, local governments, and participating businesses a strong tool to develop a trained, professional workforce. This bill would establish a program that allows employers to provide individuals who have a high school level education with mentorships and workforce training opportunities, prioritizing the fields of climate, education, and health. The program would also give participants access to an extensive professional network and state resources for employment.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 546. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.