



February 28, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable James Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: S.B. 561 - Goodwill Industries of Chesapeake Excel Center in Baltimore City - Alterations

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

My name is Lisa Rusyniak, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake. Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake is a strong supporter of this bill.

Thanks to your support, last year, the legislature appropriated funds in the amount of \$500,000 for each fiscal year 2024 and 2025 to Goodwill Industries of Chesapeake for the purpose of starting The Excel Center, and Adult High School to be located in Baltimore City. This language in this bill is needed to specify that Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Inc., located in Baltimore City, is the designated recipient of funding to support the establishment of this adult high school. There are four Goodwill agencies with territories that include parts of Maryland, so this clarification would stipulate that only Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake is the qualified grantee. Our territory includes Central Maryland and the Eastern Shore.

In June 2018, MSDE and DOL approved Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake's application to open The Excel Center. Its concept is unlike any current adult education program in Maryland. The Excel Center in Baltimore City would allow individuals twenty-one years of age and over the opportunity to obtain their high school diploma through an accelerated two-year program, while simultaneously engaging in job training. This educational attainment pathway would increase the access our participants have to higher education, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.



The Excel Center model began in 2010 with a single school in Indiana and now has grown to include 31 schools across five states plus Washington, D.C. The growth of The Excel Center supports thousands of adults across the nation as they work to complete their high school education, increase their independence and reach their potential. Excel Centers operated by Goodwills around the country graduated 1,500 students during the 2020-21 school year. Overall, Excel Centers have now graduated more than 9,500 students. Attaining a high school diploma increases a person's income by an average of \$9,000 per year.

Our Excel Center is scheduled to open in September 2023 at 222 East Redwood Street. We are currently renovating the building, hiring staff and greatly anticipating the opening. Your support will ensure our continued success. We request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Rusyniak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "L" and "R".

Lisa Rusyniak  
President and CEO