



BLIND INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES OF MARYLAND

Monday, March 13, 2023

Senator Guy Guzzone,
Chair, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee
11 Bladen Street
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Blind Industries and Services of Maryland
Letter of Support of Senate Bill 0906 Industry 4.0
Technology Grant Program

Dear Senator Guzzone:

Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM) is a nonprofit organization that conducts manufacturing and retail operations which provides employment opportunities to blind and low vision individuals in the State of Maryland. BISM was established in 1908 to provide vocational rehabilitation, continuous employment, and other resources to blind adults of Maryland.

The MISSION of BISM is consistent with stated policy set forth in Section 7-702: "It is the policy of the State to encourage and enable blind, visually impaired, deaf, and hard of hearing individuals to participate fully in the social and economic life of the State and to be employed."

BISM is currently the largest employer of blind and low vision individuals in the State of Maryland and its Independence Training and Rehabilitation Division provides programs which include independence and vocational readiness training.

With Senate Bill 0906 Industry 4.0 Technology Grant Program funds, BISM can expand, upgrade, and improve the accessibility of its technology systems and transfigure its training abilities. BISM is constantly striving to create new and in-demand vocational opportunities which will afford higher value to its employees – both inside BISM and in the general job market. Training and access to higher paying technology jobs must be a part of BISM's training and vocational opportunities.

BISM enthusiastically endorses Senate Bill 0906 Industry 4.0 Technology Grant Program and recommend funding at the maximum level.

Thank you for your leadership.

Michael Gosse, Ph.D.
President
Blind Industries & Services of Maryland