Senate Finance Committee

Testimony by Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director

March 7, 2023

SB 801 – Economic Development – Cybersecurity – Cyber Maryland Program

POSITION: Support

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, we offer our support for this legislation and thank Senator Hester for introducing this important bill. Our colleges provide the largest opportunity for students to earn entry level certifications and licensures in cybersecurity to address a growing and increasingly challenging array of online attacks.

There are over 25,000 open cybersecurity positions unfilled in Maryland. Cybersecurity impacts every aspect of Maryland's economy and too often, there is not the necessary alignment with what the cybercommunity community needs and what workforce development opportunities exist. More strategic attention needs to be given to align the cyberthreats of today and the future with what our students need to be employed. Also, too often students who are trained in the necessary skills needed are not hired because HR and personnel departments are not aligned with what the industry wants as well, making it even more challenging to fill the enormous number of vacancies in cybersecurity. Fourteen of our colleges make up the Cyber- Technology Pathways Across Maryland (CPAM) Consortium, focused on training adult learners, including women and other underrepresented groups in the field of cybersecurity, and connecting them with employers.

Our students are key to developing the cybersecurity workforce. Our students are diverse and over 90 percent stay and work in their communities once they have earned their credential. Also key to growing the cyber workforce is entry level employees, who often earn their licensure or certificate at a community college in Maryland and become life-long learners and continue to enroll and grow their skills as they advance within the field. Many even already have four-year degrees but given the nature of cybersecurity, must continue to enroll and learn new skills at our colleges. Our students are often underutilized and are eager to participate in growing Maryland's economy. This bill will align our States cybersecurity needs by establishing a framework that will bring into line business and industry with training and the workforce.

MACC requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 801.