

**TO:** The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee

**FROM:** Christy Wyskiel

**DATE:** March 7, 2023

**RE:** SB 801 – Cyber Maryland Workforce

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Johns Hopkins University and Medicine urges a favorable report on **SB 801 – Cyber Maryland Workforce**.

We are enthusiastic about leveraging the state's strong cybersecurity industry to create more diverse, family advancing jobs in this rapidly growing area. We are a state of strong assets, but we lack an overarching strategy to build critical mass and jobs of the future.

Maryland's cybersecurity industry, both private and public, suffers from a chronic shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals, with over 25,000 open cybersecurity positions in the State. This shortage of professionals hinders the growth of the State's cybersecurity industry and inhibits opportunities for future growth for existing and potential employers. If we want to attract more companies and jobs, we should create a pipeline of diverse candidates to fill these jobs.

**SB801** is the first step in addressing this issue. **SB801** creates the Cyber Maryland Program at TEDCO and establishes a Cyber Maryland Board that can work with employers, entrepreneurs, and skills programs to attract and retain talent in the state in his critical industry.

The strategic plan will inform the alignment of existing cyber training programs and potential new ones with the cybersecurity industry needs. This alignment of training programs with industry needs is necessary to address the shortage of skilled workers; it also works to ensure that the State's investment in workforce development matches the industry's needs.

I support this work from the vantage of the local technology pipeline: at Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures, we support innovators who build investible companies based on academic discovery. In this regional hotbed of academic innovation (which includes the University of Maryland, among others), Johns Hopkins alone is producing over 10 startup companies a year. In order to grow locally and produce jobs, our state must have appropriate infrastructure, and a trained, skilled workforce is a critical component.

Our track record at Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures shows that smart, targeted investments in innovation can yield real economic results. JHU invested \$70 million to build robust innovation infrastructure from 2014-2019, focused on the resources that early-stage technology start-ups need; this investment has resulted in the flow of over \$2B in venture capital into Maryland-based startups and the creation of approximately 1,500 Maryland jobs since 2014.

## Government and Community Affairs

One of our recent success stories can illustrate this opportunity. Protenus is a cybersecurity company that protects sensitive medical records for health systems. Protenus built its company in downtown Baltimore now has customers across the county. Protenus would like to continue to grow in Maryland, as would other companies emerging from Johns Hopkins and its peer anchor institutions. Failure to act will jeopardize our retention of such companies.

Maryland must demonstrate its commitment to leading in tech and innovation. A bold and sustained strategy, backed by investment, is needed to ensure Maryland's economic competitiveness. The bill includes supporting workforce development efforts to train our State's residents for the jobs of the future. For the State to develop as a true innovation ecosystem in a high growth area like cybersecurity, the support that companies need to sustain and grow must be available here. Therefore, we urge a favorable report on **Senate Bill 801** to give those companies the tools they need to do so.

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