



Senator Melony Griffith *Chair*
Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: *Senate Bill 801/ HB1189: Economic Development - Cybersecurity - Cyber Maryland Program- SUPPORT*

March 7, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

As President & Chief Executive Officer of the National Cryptologic Foundation (NCF) and member of the Maryland Cybersecurity Council on the Workforce Development Sub-committee, I write this letter in support of Senate Bill 801/HB1189, entitled: "*Economic Development - Cybersecurity - Cyber Maryland Program.*"

NCF's mission is to strengthen trust in the digital ecosystem to ensure democracy and freedom. We educate and engage our citizens to be cyber smart individuals and develop pathways for our future cyber workforce and engage and convene partners to address emerging cyber issues. Our efforts help reduce cyber workforce deficits and current skills shortfalls, thereby promoting cyber professions as a fulfilling career choice.

The establishment of the Cyber Maryland Program contained in this legislation will support the state's campaign to increase the cybersecurity workforce and aggressively reduce workforce vacancies in the next three (3) years. As written, the purpose of the Cyber Maryland Program will not only create a talent pipeline, but it will also serve as a "one-stop shop" for Maryland employers seeking to leverage cyber workforce development, education, and training programs. The bill also would create a viable funding mechanism to support the goals of the Cyber Maryland Program and provide grants to educational institutions and non-profit organizations operating cybersecurity programs.

According to cyberseek.org, over 26,000 cybersecurity positions are currently unfilled in Maryland and over 725,000 in the U.S. (February 27, 2023). These numbers will continue to grow while there is a significant gap in the current workforce to fill these positions. Many employers, including the federal government, seek to expand their workforce in 2023. For example, in a January 25, 2023 press release, the National Security Agency (NSA) announced it is undertaking one of its largest hiring surges in 30 years. Employers across the board, including NSA and other federal government agencies, are wooing tech professionals laid off from tech giants, including Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Salesforce, Alphabet, and others, to fill current openings.

It is for the reasons mentioned, I am in full support of SB801/HB1189. This legislation was introduced last year and I continue to strongly urge this committee to give this legislation a **FAVORABLE** report and to enact this important piece of legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Nelson
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Cryptologic Foundation

cc.

Delegate Catherine M. Forbes, Legislative District 43B, Sponsor of HB 1189