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Capital Budget

Education and Economic Development

Chair, Oversight Committee on Pensions

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The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 1189
Economic Development – Cybersecurity – Cyber Maryland Program
Testimony of Delegate Cathi Forbes
Health and Government Operations
Economic Matters
March 8, 2023

What this bill does

This bill would create a Cyber Maryland Program to study our strengths in this sector and ensure that our current investments in workforce development are focused, while planning future investments aimed at making Maryland one of the most advanced IT workforces in the nation. The goal of the Cyber Maryland Program is to develop a statewide strategic plan for cybersecurity workforce development.

Why this bill benefits Maryland

Currently the state of Maryland invests more than $20 million each year in workforce development programs targeted at cybersecurity and other technology internship opportunities. This bill will develop a Cyber Maryland Program within TEDCO (Maryland Technology Development Corporation) with the task of evaluating what we do, identifying our strengths, engaging in demand planning, and making recommendations to bolster our workforce.

Cybersecurity is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. There are thousands of unfilled jobs available in this industry that pay well and have opportunities for advancement. Many of the entry level jobs require only basic IT training. Other states like Georgia and Florida have recognized this workforce opportunity and have invested heavily and seen a growth return on that investment. The initial investments in these states have led to both Federal and private investments.

In Maryland we have an ecosystem of cybersecurity assets including Fort Meade, National Security Agency (NSA), and the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST). We have cybersecurity programs in our higher education institutions, with both certificate and degree programs at our 4-year and community college campuses. We have programs in high schools around the state that lead to certificates. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future will make unprecedented investments in Career & Technical Education and those investments should be guided, and strategically planned, so students are prepared to take jobs that are available, and have opportunities for advancement and good salaries.

All of these "cyber workforce assets" can be managed under the proposed Cyber Maryland Program.

I ask for a favorable report.

Thank you.