



Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
House Health & Government Operations (HGO) Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

March 29, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and Members of the House HGO 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 educate the public on the importance of cryptology and cybersecurity in defending our nation with a focus on educating the public, especially the nation's brightest young minds. As a nationally reputed provider of assured quality cyber education resources focused on K-20 cohorts, 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 over 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 education 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 these reasons; I am in full support of SB801/HB1189. This legislation was introduced last year, I 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