

FAVORABLE

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 1189

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - CYBERSECURITY - CYBER MARYLAND PROGRAM

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POSITION: FAVORABLE

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Chair Pena-Melnyk , Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1189.

The Cyber Maryland Program will leverage existing infrastructure across Maryland and will build on current educational programs and workforce training assets in the state. This Bill will provide the necessary resources to support the urgent and growing cybersecurity needs across Maryland.

On any given day, there are more than 26,000 unfilled cybersecurity jobs in Maryland, affecting not only cyber and IT companies, but cybersecurity functions that are embedded in other industries. These vacancies create security vulnerabilities in our critical infrastructure and essential services, but we don't have applicant pools with the right skills to fill our open positions. The Maryland Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program as it currently exists is not designed to meet the needs of me or my company. The program must permit the employment of personnel on a part-time basis while they attend two-or four-year colleges and universities to advance their cyber security knowledge. The requirement for companies to provide wages while this schooling occurs while also requiring tuition assistance is too cumbersome of a financial burden on small businesses, even with RA grants and assistance provided by the State of Maryland. Internships and apprenticeships are a key to growing a strong cyber security workforce and this bill will allow small businesses like mine to ensure Maryland's strong cyber security posture in years to come.

Research conducted by the Cyber Maryland Program would facilitate the State's ability to make data-driven decisions. It will provide an infusion of resources to impactful training programs and will help remove barriers to build a skilled and diverse cybersecurity talent pipeline. By supporting this Bill and the Cyber Maryland Program, you will train Marylanders for good paying jobs with high growth potential. Our organization urges a favorable report. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.