



**SENATE
FINANCE COMMITTEE
Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
February 22, 2024**

**HOUSE
ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE
Delegate CT Wilson, Chair
February 21, 2024**

TESTIMONY

**Submitted by
Dr. Falecia D. Williams, President**

Senate Bill 0511/House Bill 0650- Labor and Employment - Apprenticeship Standards - Ratio of Apprentices to Journeypersons

Position: Favorable

As the President of Prince George's Community College, I support Senate Bill 0511/House Bill 0650 - Labor and Employment - Apprenticeship Standards - Ratio of Apprentices to Journeypersons. This legislation tackles critical issues surrounding labor and employment, particularly apprenticeship standards, and aligns seamlessly with our commitment to workforce development and economic prosperity.

At our institution, we prioritize offering top-tier education and training programs tailored to meet the demands of today's ever-evolving job market. However, we recognize the challenges faced by small businesses, especially those unable to afford hiring one apprentice at a time. With over 80% of Maryland businesses and over 90% of Prince George's County businesses having fewer than 49 employees, it is imperative to increase access to registered apprenticeships. This bill's proposal to adjust the ratio from 1:1 to a more feasible 3:1 will enable small businesses to leverage the benefits and funding of apprenticeship programs, fostering growth and opportunity within our communities.

Moreover, addressing the rising youth unemployment and crime rates necessitates proactive measures. By expanding access to apprenticeships and livable wage careers, particularly for youth and young adults, we can effectively combat the root causes of these issues. Many of these individuals possess the potential to excel in non-traditional apprenticeship occupations. Adjusting the ratio to 3:1 will create enhanced opportunities, diverting youth away from crime and violence and towards meaningful economic pathways.

Furthermore, non-traditional occupations present promising avenues for various marginalized populations, including immigrants, high school graduates, English language learners, and returning citizens. Increasing the apprenticeship ratio from 3:1 opens doors to livable wage employment, empowering these communities to overcome barriers and thrive in the workforce.



PRINCE GEORGE'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
pgcc.edu

In conclusion, I urge you to support Senate Bill 0511/House Bill 0650 as a critical step towards strengthening our apprenticeship programs and advancing our workforce development efforts.

Sincerely,

Falecia D. Williams, Ed.D.
President
Prince George's Community College