



February 5, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Support for House Bill 582**

Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Distinguished Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

**The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) requests a FAVORABLE REPORT on House Bill 582.**

AAEDC is a quasi-governmental organization whose mission is to serve as a catalyst for business growth in Anne Arundel County – thereby increasing job opportunities, expanding the tax base, and improving citizens’ quality of life. We offer a host of services to accomplish this, and we are proud to offer them to businesses of all sizes and sectors.

As a member of the Baltimore Tech Hub Consortium, I write this letter in support of a bill that will help sustain and grow the technology sector. Within this sector, 2,000-plus companies provide over 22,000 jobs in Anne Arundel County. The Pava LaPere Acceleration Grant Program will grow this industry by providing \$50,000 grants to student technology-focused startup companies located in the Baltimore Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The Bill supports startups founded by students or faculty of Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), which was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> best community college in the U.S. in the College Consensus Best Community Colleges 2023. AACC’s School of Science, Technology and Education offers outstanding, affordable educational opportunities, extensive industry connections, numerous four-year transfer partnerships, and quality courses that rival any four-year institution at a fraction of the cost. AAEDC is well positioned to leverage our tech-focused resources with the Pava LePere grant opportunity to help launch startups within the County through AACC or other educational institutions.

The Program also supports the overarching opportunity of the Baltimore Tech Hub by fostering the growth of the entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem in Maryland and allowing Maryland to better compete for additional funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic



Development Administration. The funding set forth in this legislation will be a direct state commitment to the Baltimore Tech Hub's application for funding, ensuring that state dollars are spent where they can receive the highest return on investment.

AAECE strongly supports House Bill 582 and respectfully requests a favorable report on these important resources to our regional economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Gowan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Amy Gowan  
CEO/President