

Board of Directors

Franklyn D. Baker
President & CEO
United Way of Central Maryland

John Brothers
President
T. Rowe Price Foundation

Ronald Daniels
President
Johns Hopkins University

Tisha Edwards
Secretary of Appointments
Office of the Governor of Maryland

Matthew Gallagher*
President & CEO
Goldseker Foundation

Mary Beth Haller
Acting Commissioner
Baltimore City Health Department

Lisa Lawson*
President & CEO
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Danista E. Hunte
Executive Director
Child First Authority

Bruce E. Jarrell
President
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Anthony L. Jenkins
President
Coppin State University

Carim V. Khouzami
President & CEO
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company

Alysia Lee
President
Baltimore Children & Youth Fund

Mark Lerner
Founding Partner
Blanket Fort Foundation

Brian D. Pieninck
President & CEO
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

Sonja Santelises
CEO
Baltimore City Public Schools

Shanaysha Sauls
President & CEO
Baltimore Community Foundation

The Honorable Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore

David Wilson
President
Morgan State University

* Current co-chairs of the
Baltimore's Promise Board of Directors.

Chief Executive Officer: Julia Baez

Written Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1245

Submitted to the Maryland House Appropriations Committee March 5, 2025

Chairperson Barnes, Vice Chairperson Chang, and Members of the Committee,

I am Kate Wolfson, representing Baltimore's Promise, a collective impact organization dedicated to improving career pathways for young people in Baltimore through initiatives like CareerBound, which is on target to put more than 8,300 youth on the path to economic self-sufficiency by 2030. I submit this testimony in strong **opposition to House Bill 1245**, which repeals the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students and the associated funding.

Career counseling is a **critical bridge between education and employment**, helping students make informed decisions about their futures. The current framework ensures that students receive **individualized career guidance**, access to **high-quality apprenticeships**, and exposure to **diverse career opportunities** that align with Maryland's workforce needs. **Repealing these provisions, as proposed in HB1245, would remove a vital support system for students across the state.**

In the past six months of the current school year, **Baltimore Career Coaching Initiative has connected with more than 17,000 Baltimore City youth, providing individualized career coaching to youth in grades 6-12 in 115 Baltimore City Public Schools, helping students to better identify, explore, and plan for their post-secondary career aspirations.** At Baltimore's Promise, we have seen firsthand how effective career counseling benefits young people:

- **Our first school-to-apprenticeship student** was identified, met all readiness requirements for an adult apprenticeship, and has begun his path to a sustainable career.

- **Paid internships with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)** provided students at Edmondson-Westside High School with hands-on experience and direct pathways into transportation careers; youth voice is now contributing to the red line project as a result.
- **CareerBound partners with local employers and the workforce development board** to ensure students receive **mentorship, work-based learning, and access to living-wage jobs** upon graduation.

By dismantling existing career counseling infrastructure, HB1245 would disproportionately harm students from **historically underserved communities** who rely on these programs for economic mobility. Instead of eliminating a successful model, we urge the General Assembly to **support the alternative bill, HB772**, which extends career counseling provisions and ensures that Maryland continues to invest in its future workforce.

We also encourage **collaboration among workforce boards and school systems statewide** to develop a **coordinated approach** that strengthens career counseling rather than dismantling it. **Baltimore City has been an exemplar for career counseling**, demonstrating the early success that deep collaboration has produced between the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Baltimore City Community College.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an **unfavorable** report on HB1245.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kate E. Wolfson, Esq.
Director, CareerBound
Baltimore's Promise