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3/2/25

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Opposition to HB 1245 – Protecting Career Counseling for Maryland Students

Dear Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee and the Ways & Means Committee,

As a student in Anne Arundel County, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1245, which would eliminate the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students. This program is important for students in Maryland, as it supports students' career choices and gives opportunities to better help them in working towards ones career. Career coaches connect students to real world opportunities connecting them too workforce opportunities, Career fairs, and in-demand jobs such as Hospitality, IT, Transporatation, Construction and Health in AAC, as we have come to know it as (HITCH). Eliminating career coaches would be a step backward for all Maryland students, workforce, and our economy.

As a student, I see career coaches working with students to better their understanding of career opportunities. Career coaches help students find the job in that exact career cluster by having students do a career test on Pathful. The results gave students a career match from the test. If it weren't for this test then I would never have known what type of nurse I want to be when I grow up, which is a nurse practitioner for pediatrics. There are so many jobs in a career, sometimes students don't know what exact job they want to do, but career coaches help them understand and choose the job that is in our best interest as a student.

Removing this program would:

- **Hurt students** by limiting their access to career exploration, job readiness training, and employer connections.
- **Hurt employers** who rely on a skilled talent pipeline to meet workforce demands in high-growth industries.
- **Hurt Maryland's economy**, as students graduate without clear pathways into family-sustaining careers, leading to higher unemployment and skills gaps.

Rather than eliminating a program that is already proving successful, Maryland should be investing further in career coaching and workforce-aligned career counseling. I urge you to reject HB 1245 and preserve the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students. Maryland must continue investing in the future of its students, ensuring they have the

knowledge, skills, and support necessary to thrive in their careers and contribute to our state's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to share more about how career coaching is positively impacting students across Maryland.

Sincerely,

Idria Jones-Johnson

Old Mill Middle North School