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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 career coach working directly with Maryland's students, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1461, which would eliminate the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students. This program is critical in preparing young people for their future careers, connecting them with real-world workforce opportunities, employer networks, and in-demand career pathways. Eliminating it would be a significant step backward for Maryland's students, workforce, and economy.

As a career coach, I work with students, employers, and educators to ensure young people understand career options, apprenticeships, and workforce training opportunities. 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,

Liz P. Ogudugu

Career Coach
Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation