

**Testimony of Brannndon Jackson**  
Before the Maryland General Assembly  
**Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**Senate Bill – SB161**  
**Public Hearing on the State Department of Education**  
**- Driver Education and Career and Technical**  
**Education - Funding**

Good afternoon, esteemed Chairman Guy Guzzone and Vice Chairman Jim Rosapepe of the Budget and Taxation Committee. My name is Brannndon Jackson, and I am a resident of Largo, Maryland. I am a passionate advocate for education and youth development and have long worked to ensure that all students have access to opportunities that prepare them for success in life.

I am here today to express my strong support for Senate Bill SB161, which aims to enhance funding for career and technical education (CTE) and driver's education programs. This legislation is vital to providing students with the skills they need to be both college- and career-ready, including the ability to obtain a driver's license—a critical tool for accessing employment and educational opportunities.

This bill also plays a crucial role in advancing workforce development, equipping young people with the training and certifications needed to pursue meaningful career paths. For many students, particularly those from

underserved communities, these programs are a lifeline to greater opportunities and a brighter future.

I want to stress the importance of restoring driver's education as a core offering in our educational system. The absence of this training in high schools has created significant barriers for students who cannot afford private instruction, leaving them at a disadvantage when it comes to mobility and independence. Senate Bill SB161 provides a pathway to address this gap, ensuring that all students—regardless of their socioeconomic background—can develop the skills needed to operate a vehicle safely and responsibly.

I commend the efforts to prioritize this legislation and respectfully request that the committee include programs like these in the annual budget. Doing so will significantly expand access to driver education and career and technical training, preparing students to become productive and contributing members of our community.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on Senate Bill SB161.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.