

TO: The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair, House Economic Matters Committee and Members of the Committee

FROM: Bruce Spector, Chairman of the Board, Baltimore Cyber Range

DATE: February 25th, 2025

RE: HB501 Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Chair Wilson and members of the House Economic Matters Committee. My name is Bruce Spector, and I am the Chairman of Baltimore Cyber Range (BCR Cyber), a Maryland-based company dedicated to developing a well-trained cybersecurity workforce that meets the needs of Maryland's economy. Our mission is to equip individuals with hands-on, real-world cybersecurity training to fill the thousands of job vacancies in this critical sector.

I am here today to express support for House Bill 501 – The Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act, which advances the growth and accessibility of registered apprenticeships across Maryland, including in nontraditional industries such as cybersecurity.

A well-structured apprenticeship system is essential for building a skilled, productive workforce that supports Maryland's economy. Apprenticeships provide individuals with practical, on-the-job training while allowing businesses to develop a talent pipeline that meets their specific workforce needs. The Moore Administration has taken important steps to scale and expand apprenticeships beyond traditional trades, and this legislation reinforces that commitment. By broadening apprenticeship opportunities in fields such as cybersecurity, healthcare, and technology, Maryland will strengthen its workforce and remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy.

Baltimore Cyber Range has direct experience with registered apprenticeships, having previously run a successful registered apprenticeship program. We are currently working to establish a new registered apprenticeship program focused on training professionals for Security Operations Centers (SOCs), a critical area of need within the cybersecurity industry. Through this work, we have seen both the benefits and challenges of implementing apprenticeships in technology-driven fields. Unlike traditional trade apprenticeships, technology apprenticeships are not as well established and often face unique obstacles, including the lack of standardized training models, difficulty in meeting traditional journeyman-to-apprentice ratios, and high costs associated with recruiting, training, and supporting apprentices.

House Bill 501 provides key solutions to these challenges. The bill allows for greater flexibility in journeyman-to-apprentice ratios, ensuring that employers in nonhazardous industries such as cybersecurity and IT can structure apprenticeship programs that align with real-world business needs. By authorizing a process for formal deviation requests from rigid ratio requirements, this legislation will allow employers to provide more apprenticeship opportunities without unnecessary administrative burdens.

The bill also establishes financial incentives that will help employers and apprenticeship sponsors offset the costs associated with running these programs. These incentives will support expenses related to recruitment, education, training, accommodations for disabilities, and materials. By easing financial burdens, more



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businesses will be encouraged to invest in apprenticeship programs, expanding Maryland's workforce development efforts and helping to meet current and existing skilled labor demands.

At Baltimore Cyber Range, we are committed to supporting the expansion of apprenticeship programs and believe this legislation will assist us and others in doing so. We appreciate the legislature's efforts to strengthen Maryland's workforce through apprenticeships and urge a favorable report on HB 501.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,
Bruce Spector
Chairman of the Board
Baltimore Cyber Range