

February 25, 2025

Hon. C.T. Wilson  
Chair, Economic Matters Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
**Re: Support for House Bill 501**

Dear Chair Wilson and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Greater Washington Partnership (the Partnership), I am writing to express our support for HB 501 (the RAISE Act), which would enhance the State of Maryland's apprenticeship and workforce development infrastructure.

The Partnership is a nonprofit alliance of nearly 50 leading corporate, university, and nonprofit employers in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia committed to championing the region's growth and vitality. Our member organizations represent more than 300,000 employees, and together we leverage our collective resources to identify shared challenges and offer solutions to the region's critical workforce, transportation, and economic development challenges. The Partnership's Skills and Talent Initiative works with educators and employers to strengthen talent pipelines and ensure learners have access to training and jobs that lead to economic mobility. The RAISE Act is aligned with our goal of fostering a skilled talent pipeline for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

The US labor force is expected to grow just 0.5% annually through 2031<sup>1</sup>, constraining the supply of workers across fields and highlighting the need to invest in pathways to "middle-skill" jobs that require more than a high school diploma. According to Partnership research, 80% of general contractors nationally are concerned they will not be able to fill open roles in skilled trades, and employers in other in-demand industries like healthcare and tech are seeking ways to reach talent and address critical skills gaps.<sup>2</sup>

Apprenticeships are a cost-effective solution, allowing participants to earn real-world experience, classroom instruction, and a living wage while pursuing industry-recognized credentials. Research shows that 94% of apprentices who complete registered apprenticeships retain employment after completing their program<sup>3</sup> and they see an average wage gain of 77%.<sup>4</sup> Despite Maryland ranking among the top five states nationwide for apprenticeship growth in the last decade, apprentices accounted for just 0.49% of the state's workforce last year, highlighting the pathway's potential for continued expansion.<sup>5</sup> By accelerating approval of Registered Apprenticeship programs and professional licensure of apprenticeships, the RAISE Act will increase Maryland employers' access to well-trained candidates in skilled trades and boost apprentices in the state's workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031](#), Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> [2024 Skills Forecasting: Employer signaling for the future of work](#), Greater Washington Partnership, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> [ApprenticeshipUSA Factsheet](#), US Department of Labor, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> [Living Wages in Registered Apprenticeship Programs: An Assessment by Industry, Demographics, State, and Labor Policy](#), Illinois Economic Policy Institute, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> [How States are Driving the Expansion of Apprenticeships: State Apprenticeship Policy Scan](#), Apprenticeships for America, 2024.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 501. Thank you for your consideration and shared commitment to reducing barriers to economic mobility and opportunity, as well as making our region the best place to live, work, and build a business.

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