

Edward Arnold
Career Coach
AASCE/AAWDC
613 Global Way
Linthicum Heights, MD 21090
earnold@aawdc.org
February 27, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Opposition to SB 852 – Protecting Career Counseling for Maryland Students

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and the Budget and Taxation Committee,

As a career coach working directly with Maryland's students, I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 852, which would eliminate the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students. This program is critical in preparing young people for job readiness, exploring diverse career options, and connecting them with real-world workforce opportunities, employer networks, and in-demand career pathways. Eliminating it would be detrimental to the youth of Maryland, depriving them of crucial support and guidance, as well as to the workforce and economy.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of working as a career coach at two alternative schools and currently at Meade High School. Through these experiences, I have observed that students, regardless of their school environment, are often unprepared for real-world demands. Career coaching has allowed me to bridge the gap for students who were previously unaware of various career opportunities. This program has been particularly impactful for me, as I see reflections of my own high school experience in the students I work with. As a senior in 2012, I was unaware of the endless opportunities beyond college and had to navigate my future on my own. Fortunately, I successfully attended college and began preparing myself for a career. 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. This issue is bigger than a choice; it will impact the future state, economy, and world. One student can change the world, and imagine if that youth is one who has no access to what this program offers. The potential loss of this program could mean the difference between a student realizing their potential and one who remains unaware of the opportunities available to them.

I urge you to reject SB 852 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,
Edward Arnold