

Senate Finance Committee

February 19, 2025

SB 431 - Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **SB 431**, which makes critical investments in registered apprenticeships and strengthens Maryland's workforce development pipeline.

Community colleges play a central role in preparing Maryland's workforce, offering accessible, high-quality education that aligns with the needs of local employers. Apprenticeships are a proven model for career readiness, allowing students to gain hands-on experience, earn wages while learning, and enter high-demand industries with minimal student debt. SB 431 expands and enhances apprenticeship opportunities, ensuring more students have access to structured career pathways that lead to good-paying, stable jobs.

A strong apprenticeship system benefits students, businesses, and the broader economy. Many community college students balance coursework with jobs and family responsibilities, and apprenticeships offer them the ability to earn while they learn, reducing financial barriers to higher education. By providing clearer pathways to professional licensure and ensuring that apprenticeship programs remain aligned with industry standards, this bill will allow more Marylanders to complete their training and transition smoothly into full-time employment.

SB 431 also expands apprenticeship opportunities beyond traditional trades, opening doors in emerging and high-growth industries such as healthcare, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing. These fields require skilled workers, and community colleges are uniquely positioned to partner with employers to train, upskill, and prepare students for success in these evolving sectors. SB 431 strengthens collaboration by ensuring employers receive the support they need to expand apprenticeship programs, helping Maryland's economy grow and thrive. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 431**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.