



February 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for SB431 RAISE ACT– With Clarifying Amendment

Dear Chairwoman Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee;

I am writing to express my strong support for SB431, which seeks to enhance and expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in Maryland. As the Chief Operating Officer of Hamilton-Ryker, I have seen firsthand the transformative impact of apprenticeship programs on workforce development.

Through our workforce development division, TalentGro, we serve as a federal and state sponsor and intermediary for RAPs, supporting over 800 unique employer locations nationwide and managing over 7,700 healthcare apprentices. We are deeply committed to increasing access to high-quality apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for underrepresented populations and our military community. Currently, we manage nearly 500 apprentices in Maryland, which is growing steadily every day; however, funding instability stalls our efforts.

SB431 represents a critical step in strengthening and solidifying Maryland's apprenticeship system. However, I encourage the Committee to clarify that **qualified intermediaries** with proven expertise in apprenticeship program management can also serve as program sponsors. We have the proven track record and expertise to scale these programs to your desired numbers. Additionally, **reimbursable costs for qualified intermediaries** should explicitly include expenses related to program development, management, and compliance with the regulations governing RAPs. These provisions will ensure that experienced intermediaries can continue providing high-quality apprenticeship opportunities while meeting the rigorous standards for program success.

I appreciate your leadership in advancing this critical legislation and welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource as the bill progresses. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can provide further insights or assistance.

Sincerely,

Shari Franey
Chief Operating Officer

Cc: Ruth Patterson; TalentGro Director
Mary Ann Lisanti, Consultant