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Prince George's County

MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business, and Administration

Pensions

Chair, Procurement

Joint Committees

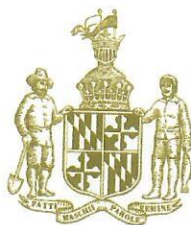
Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and

State Personnel Oversight



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY
SENATOR JOANNE C. BENSON
SB688-PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS APPRENTICESHIP REQUIREMENTS
(MARYLAND WORKFORCE APPRENTICESHIP UTILIZATION ACT)

Good afternoon, Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Antonio Hayes, and Esteemed Members of the Finance Committee.

I am here today to express my unwavering support for SB688, the Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act. This bill is a crucial step towards enhancing the quality and availability of apprenticeship opportunities in our state, particularly within public works contracts.

Apprenticeships are a proven pathway to skilled employment, providing hands-on training and education that prepare individuals for successful careers. By requiring contractors and subcontractors to employ a certain number of qualified apprentices or journey workers, SB688 ensures that more Maryland residents will have access to these valuable opportunities. This not only benefits the individuals involved but also strengthens our workforce and economy. Studies show that 91% of apprentices who complete their programs gain employment, with an average starting wage of approximately \$60,000 per year.

The bill's provisions to extend apprenticeship requirements to the University System of Maryland and Baltimore City Community College are particularly commendable. These institutions play a vital role in our states' education and workforce development efforts, and their inclusion in the apprenticeship requirements will help ensure that students receive the practical experience they need to succeed in their chosen fields. Considering that most graduates of apprenticeship programs earn an average of \$300,000 more in their careers than their peers who do not participate in such programs.

Furthermore, the repeal of provisions allowing payments to apprenticeship programs instead of employing apprentices is a positive step. This change will ensure that apprentices receive the on-the-job training they need rather than simply benefiting from financial contributions to programs. It emphasizes the importance of real-world experience in the development of skilled workers.

Employers who utilize apprentices report a 36% return on investment due to increased productivity and reduced recruitment costs.

Additionally, the immediate benefits for apprentices have the potential to create long-term positive outcomes for our state. By investing in the future of our workforce, we are not only helping individuals achieve their full potential but also ensuring that Maryland remains competitive in an increasingly global economy. The investment in our workforce will lead to a more prosperous and equitable society for all. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, apprenticeship programs contribute significantly to higher area rates of employment and wage growth.

I respectfully urge a favorable vote for SB688. Thank you for your time and consideration.