



10440 Little Patuxent Pkwy
Floor 12
Columbia, MD 21044
+443-853-1970
info@cyber-association.com
www.cyber-association.com

HB1309 – Cybersecurity – Standards, Compliance, and Audits – Alterations
House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 10, 2025
Favorable

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyck and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Tasha Cornish, and I am writing on behalf of the Cybersecurity Association, Inc. (CA), a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization dedicated to strengthening Maryland's cybersecurity industry. Our association represents over 600 businesses ranging from small enterprises to large corporations employing nearly 100,000 Marylanders. We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in **favorable support** of House Bill 1309, which aims to enhance cybersecurity standards across Maryland's local school systems.

Support for Enhanced Cybersecurity Requirements

The Cybersecurity Association strongly supports the provisions in HB1309 that require local school systems to comply with the State Minimum Cybersecurity Standards established by the Department of Information Technology (DoIT). The inclusion of regular cybersecurity maturity assessments, dedicated cybersecurity personnel, and oversight mechanisms will significantly improve the cybersecurity resilience of Maryland's education system.

With schools becoming increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, it is imperative to proactively address cybersecurity risks to protect students, educators, and sensitive data from cyber threats. Establishing these minimum standards ensures a consistent and enforceable approach to cybersecurity preparedness statewide.

Ensuring Feasible Implementation

While we support these necessary cybersecurity improvements, we recognize that implementation may require additional resources for some county boards of education. Many local school systems have varying levels of cybersecurity readiness, and achieving compliance with the new standards will require investments in personnel, assessments, and security controls. To ensure that all school systems can meet these important requirements, we encourage targeted funding support for those that may need assistance.

We urge the General Assembly to explore funding mechanisms to assist county boards that have not yet met the DoIT cybersecurity standards. Providing state-level grants, technical assistance, or financial incentives will help ensure equitable implementation across all school systems, particularly those with limited resources.

Recommendations for Implementation Support

To effectively implement HB1309 while mitigating financial concerns, we recommend the following:

1. **Dedicated Funding for School Cybersecurity** – Establish a state funding mechanism to support county boards in meeting cybersecurity mandates.
2. **Expanded State-Level Assistance** – Increase the number of Information Security Officers assigned by DoIT to local school systems, providing hands-on guidance and technical support.
3. **Grant Opportunities and Federal Support** – Encourage collaboration with federal cybersecurity initiatives to secure additional funding and resources for Maryland schools.
4. **Flexible Compliance Timelines** – Allow phased implementation for county boards that require additional time and funding to reach compliance.

Conclusion

HB1309 is a critical step toward strengthening cybersecurity protections in Maryland's education sector. The Cybersecurity Association fully supports the bill's objectives and urges the General Assembly to consider targeted funding solutions to facilitate implementation without placing undue financial strain on county boards.

We appreciate your commitment to advancing cybersecurity resilience across Maryland. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.