

Word Count: 286

## **Testimony for HB82**

**Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and  
Members of the Health and Government Operations  
Committee:**

Good afternoon. For the record, I am Major General Janeen L. Birckhead, and this written testimony is in favor of SB241, the Cyber Maryland Program-Revisions. This program is critical to strengthening Maryland's cyber workforce development efforts and improving our cybersecurity posture statewide.

The Maryland National Guard and the Maryland Defense Force already play an integral role on the front lines of cybersecurity across all levels of government.

Our teams collaborate with federal partners, including U.S. Cyber Command at Fort Meade, state agencies like the Department of Information Technology, and even local K-12 school systems, to defend critical infrastructure.

Our Cyber Protection Team conducts defensive operations to secure essential systems, such as the State Board of Elections, local school networks, law enforcement agencies, and other critical state and local networks.

Additionally, the Maryland Army National Guard's Defensive Cyber Operations Element provides expertise in vulnerability assessments, cybersecurity investigations, and network threat analysis and response.

Those citizen-Soldiers, operating under Title 32 as traditional Guard members, bring flexibility to support state missions in State Active-Duty status.

Many of our activities are conducted under the Department of Defense Innovative Readiness Training program, which simultaneously provides our service members with hands-on training while enhancing the state's cybersecurity resilience.

By leveraging the expertise of cyber warriors across the Maryland Military Department, we have strengthened the state's preparedness against evolving threats. Chairman Feldman's has submitted an amendment (SB241) to include the Adjutant General on the Cyber Maryland Board. This addition will enable greater collaboration and expand opportunities for world-class cyber education and training.

In closing, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB241 with amendment. Thank you for your time.