
Favorable Position - HB 82 (Cyber Maryland Program - Revisions)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 82. My name is Tasha Cornish and I am the Executive Director of the Cybersecurity Association, Inc. (CA), a statewide, nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization dedicated to the growth and success of Maryland's cybersecurity industry. Established in 2015, CA represents over 600 businesses ranging from Fortune 500 companies to independent operators, collectively employing nearly 100,000 Marylanders.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 82, legislation that would transfer the Cyber Maryland Program and Board from TEDCO to the Maryland Department of Labor. Our members depend on a highly-skilled and agile cybersecurity workforce to grow their companies in Maryland.

This legislation demonstrates a thoughtful approach to program alignment. CA supported the establishment of the Cyber Maryland program as it worked for its final passage in 2023. At the time, TEDCO was a good fit, but now that initial work is complete a transfer to the Maryland Department of Labor is timely as the program is ready for program action. The Maryland Department of Labor possesses the expertise and resources specifically dedicated to workforce development and training. This alignment will enable the Cyber Maryland program to:

- **Enhance collaboration:** By residing within the Department of Labor, the program can more effectively collaborate with other workforce development initiatives, maximizing resources and avoiding duplication of efforts.
- **Expand reach:** The Department of Labor's established network and connections within the workforce ecosystem will allow the Cyber Maryland program to reach a broader audience, including individuals from diverse backgrounds and underserved communities.
- **Increase access to resources:** The Department of Labor has access to a wider range of funding streams and support services that can be leveraged to expand the program's impact and reach.
- **Improve program effectiveness:** Closer alignment with the Department of Labor's mission and expertise will facilitate more targeted and impactful program development and implementation.

TEDCO has done a commendable job in supporting the Cyber Maryland Program. However, this strategic move to the Department of Labor represents a natural evolution that will enable the program to thrive and better serve the needs of Maryland's cybersecurity industry and its workforce.

The cybersecurity companies we proudly call our members are essential to making Maryland the nation's leading cybersecurity hub this decade. Without a strong cybersecurity workforce, we won't be able to achieve that vision.

I urge the committee to favorably consider HB 82. This legislation is a crucial step in ensuring Maryland remains a leader in cybersecurity innovation and talent development.