January 31, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for House Bill 82 – Cyber Maryland Program - Revisions

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

On behalf of Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), I am writing to express our support for House Bill 82 (HB0082), titled "Cyber Maryland Program - Revisions." This legislation proposes transferring the Cyber Maryland Program from the Maryland Technology Development Corporation to the Maryland Department of Labor, altering the duties of the Program, and modifying the purposes for which the Cyber Maryland Fund may be used. Additionally, it seeks to revise the membership of the Cyber Maryland Board.

The cybersecurity sector is a rapidly growing field that offers significant employment opportunities. However, Latino communities have been historically underrepresented in technology-related industries. According to the Pew Research Center, as of 2023, only 8% of the U.S. cybersecurity workforce identified as Hispanic, highlighting a substantial diversity gap. By restructuring the Cyber Maryland Program under the Department of Labor, HB 82 aims to create a more streamlined and effective approach to workforce development in this critical sector.

The proposed revisions emphasize the development of a talent pipeline that reflects the racial, gender, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the state. This focus aligns with MLU's mission to promote equity and inclusion for Latino communities in Maryland. By fostering partnerships for new training and education programs, the Program can address workforce needs and provide Latino individuals with the skills necessary to succeed in cybersecurity careers.

Furthermore, the bill's provision to support innovative approaches to meeting cybersecurity workforce needs through grants to educational institutions, employers, and nonprofit organizations presents an opportunity to develop targeted initiatives that engage and train Latino students and job seekers. This approach not only benefits individuals but also strengthens Maryland's overall cybersecurity posture by diversifying the talent pool.

We respectfully urge the members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB0082. Passing this legislation will enhance Maryland's commitment to building a diverse and skilled cybersecurity workforce, providing equitable opportunities for Latino residents, and ensuring the state's competitiveness in the digital economy.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos
corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org