



**LOWER SHORE
WORKFORCE ALLIANCE**

Serving as the Workforce Development Board for the Lower Shore of Maryland

January 20, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 3
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

On behalf of the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA), a workforce development board representing Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties, and a division of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore, a regional planning and economic development agency. I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 325 – Income Tax Credit for Employers of Eligible Apprentices – Alterations.

LSWA is a workforce development board and represents one of thirteen workforce development boards in the State of Maryland, comprising the Maryland Workforce Association (MWA). The workforce development boards by design and by federal guidelines are structured to support workforce development, training, and career ladder pathways for job seekers and employers.

LSWA has partnered with Seaside Plumbing which led to a state- registered apprenticeship program. LSWA has also partnered with IEC Chesapeake to create a career track for students pursuing an electrical career by sponsoring a Pre-apprentice cohort. This has been an extremely successful program placing 85% of participants into good-paying careers. These are just two examples of adult and youth apprenticeship pathways.

The State of Maryland has taken progressive steps to address and increase apprenticeship opportunities aligning workforce development boards, CTE programs, Community Colleges, and State partners conducted an intense review of the challenges and barriers to increasing apprenticeship opportunities through the 2030 Commission spearheaded by Senator Mary Beth Carozza.

It is evident to LSWA that Senate Bill 325 will achieve the following:

- Removes barriers by eliminating the wage requirement tied to the prevailing wage. This is especially important for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland where 85% of our businesses are small businesses.
- The extension of the program duration through June 2031 will facilitate the increase in the capacity of apprenticeship programs.
- The youth apprenticeship initiative will promote career pathways for young adults and actualize growth in apprenticeship opportunities.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 325 to facilitate sustainable growth and a positive impact for apprenticeship opportunities and economic growth for the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,



Leslie Porter-Cabell, Workforce Director, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance

"Providing workforce policy, planning and oversight for the Lower Shore of Maryland"