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**House Ways and Means Committee**  
**House Appropriations Committee**  
March 4, 2025

**HB 498 – Economic Development - Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing  
Development Efforts (DECADE) Act**

**Position: Favorable**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 498**, which makes strategic investments in workforce development, industry alignment, and economic competitiveness. As the primary providers of affordable, high-quality workforce training, community colleges are crucial in preparing Maryland's residents for high-demand careers. HB 498 strengthens this mission by modernizing workforce training programs, ensuring that economic development initiatives align with industry needs, and expanding access to career-focused education.

A key component of HB 498 is the expansion of the Talent Accelerator Grant Program, which will help more students gain access to industry-aligned workforce training that leads directly to employment. Community colleges are essential partners in this effort, working closely with employers to ensure students receive the skills needed to thrive in Maryland's growing industries, including healthcare, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing. By strengthening this program, HB 498 ensures that students have greater opportunities to pursue stable, well-paying careers while supporting businesses in need of a skilled workforce.

The bill also advances Maryland's long-term economic growth by requiring the Department of Commerce to evaluate and prioritize high-growth industries. This alignment between workforce training and economic development is critical to ensuring that education remains responsive to employer needs. Community colleges are at the forefront of preparing students for these evolving career opportunities, and this initiative will help expand partnerships, increase employer engagement, and ensure that students are connected to in-demand jobs. By modernizing economic development programs and streamlining state workforce strategies, HB 498 ensures that community colleges remain central to Maryland's economic future. Strengthening the connection between education, workforce training, and economic development benefits students, businesses, and the broader economy. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 498**.

Please contact Brad Phillips ([bphillips@mdacc.org](mailto:bphillips@mdacc.org)) or Drew Jabin ([djabin@mdacc.org](mailto:djabin@mdacc.org)) with questions.