

Tony Nichols

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The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for House Bill 772

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

On behalf of the Lower Shore local workforce development board, I am writing to strongly urge your support for **House Bill 772**, which continues career counseling services led by Maryland's local workforce development boards. As you know, Maryland's local workforce boards and their partners at the state's community colleges and local education agencies are providing career counseling services to Maryland's middle and high school students in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This model is already demonstrating success in Maryland and is gaining national recognition as a best practice. As you know, Maryland's local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through direct partnerships with businesses, educators, and community organizations, we provide real-time labor market insights and direct employer connections, ensuring that students and job seekers receive career counseling aligned with actual workforce needs.

This approach is already making a significant impact:

- Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools throughout Maryland to support career counseling.
- In just the first year, more than 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career guidance, helping them explore pathways into high-demand careers.
- States across the country are looking to Maryland as a model for how workforce boards can enhance career counseling and strengthen talent pipeline development.

House Bill 772 continues the work of the workforce development boards and their partners in career counseling, ensuring that every student in Maryland has access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career decisions. This legislation is not just about guidance—it's about equipping Maryland's future workforce with clear, attainable pathways to good-paying, in-demand jobs.

We respectfully ask for your **support in advancing House Bill 772** to ensure that Maryland continues leading the way in workforce-aligned career counseling. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tony Nichols
Steering Committee Chair
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance