



MARYLAND WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

SB 509 Oral Testimony (Maryland Workforce Alliance)

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Workforce Alliance testifies in support of Senate Bill 509. MWA empowers a diverse network of stakeholders—including unions, trade organizations, and employers—to create, expand, and optimize high-quality work-based learning programs, fostering a skilled, diverse, and adaptable workforce that drives Maryland's economic prosperity and strengthens communities.

Now allowed through the Big Beautiful Bill, expanding Pell Grant funding to short-term workforce training programs will expand opportunity for all Marylanders. The federal Department of Education just put out their proposed rules on Pell Grant funding last Friday, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board Executive Director, Racheal Stephens Parker, was the lead representative of state workforce boards in that effort. MWA thanks her for her leadership, and also thanks Senator Rosapepe for bringing this bill forward.

As more residents seek alternatives to traditional post-secondary education, allowing Marylanders access to this funding will help training partners align workforce skills with industry demand, promote greater economic mobility and career advancement, and enhance Maryland's competitiveness in the global economy. MWA supports this bill because we believe this funding will support more pathways into registered apprenticeships, which are a fundamental component to the building trades industry and other key industries in the state, including healthcare and IT.

Implementation should not be difficult—community colleges across the state currently work with workforce programs and registered apprenticeships. Adding this additional funding stream would likely take minimal additional administrative effort and this ease of implementation will quickly result in increased opportunities for both workers and employers. We believe the cost for implementation will be relatively low, while the payoff will be fairly high. For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 509.

Thank you,

Gabriel Van Fyk
Executive Director
Maryland Workforce Alliance