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Nathan Rolfe  
Woodbine, MD 21797

**TESTIMONY ON SB 183 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

*Public Safety – Maryland Cyber Reserve – Established*

**TO:** Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**FROM:** Nathan Rolfe, President, Association of U.S. Cyber Forces (AUSCF)

My name is Nathan Rolfe. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 183, Public Safety – Maryland Cyber Reserve – Established. This is submitted both as a private resident of Maryland’s District 9, and as organizational support on behalf of AUSCF.

Maryland stands at a critical juncture regarding its digital infrastructure. Establishing the Maryland Cyber Reserve (MCR) is a forward-thinking solution that provides the State with the necessary agility to deploy talent and technical capabilities precisely when and where they are needed during a cyber incident. This initiative creates a vital safety net for our state and local agencies, ensuring we are not left vulnerable to evolving digital threats.

To ensure the MCR is a hub for true innovation, I strongly advocate for a recruitment strategy that prioritizes skills-based assessments over traditional educational degrees or basic industry certifications. The cybersecurity field is filled with 'specially qualified' individuals who have achieved high-level expertise through non-traditional means. By focusing on demonstrable ability, the State can tap into a broader, more capable talent pool that traditional hiring processes often overlook.

Furthermore, the selection of senior leadership within the MCR must be handled with precision. Effective command of a reserve force during a crisis requires more than just technical skill or a C-suite title at a technology firm; it requires deep experience in the planning and execution of military cyberspace operations. Prioritizing leaders who understand operational coordination and mission-critical strategy within a militia structure is essential for the Reserve's success.

Finally, the Maryland Cyber Reserve offers a powerful alternative to traditional schooling for workforce development. By providing a venue for 'hands-on' experience with relevant, real-world cyber incidents, the MCR will grow a world-class talent pool within Maryland. This practical experience is invaluable for both the individual members and the State’s overall economic and security posture.

Passing this bill will fix a critical gap in our defensive posture while simultaneously building a premier talent pipeline for the future. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 183.

Respectfully submitted,



Nathan Rolfe