

**HCCC\_SB 597\_FAV.pdf**

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Position: FAV



March 11, 2026

Legislative Position: Favorable  
Senate Bill 597  
Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the committee:

Founded in 1969, the Howard Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to helping businesses—from sole proprietors to large international firms—grow and succeed. With the power of 700 members that encompass more than 170,000 employees, the Howard County Chamber is an effective partner with elected officials and advocates for the interests of the county’s business community.

The Howard County Chamber writes in support of SB 597, which would establish an AI University Partnership and create Tech Extension Hubs to connect small businesses with artificial intelligence resources and training.

For many small businesses, artificial intelligence represents a significant opportunity to improve efficiency, customer service, and competitiveness. However, most small businesses lack the internal expertise, time, and financial resources to navigate rapidly evolving AI technologies on their own. The Tech Extension Hubs proposed in SB 597 would provide a practical solution by creating a single point of contact where small businesses can access trusted guidance, training, and connections to universities and industry experts.

The model outlined in the bill, similar to agricultural extension programs, would help bridge the gap between research institutions and the small business community. By partnering with community colleges, local employers, and business organizations, these hubs would make AI education and technical assistance more accessible to small businesses across the state. Providing these services at no cost will be particularly important for small firms that operate with limited budgets but still need to remain competitive in a rapidly changing economy.

Strengthening the connection between Maryland’s universities, workforce training programs, and the private sector will support innovation, workforce development, and long-term economic growth across Maryland. For these reasons we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 597.

Sincerely,

Kristi Simon  
President & CEO  
Howard County Chamber of Commerce

**SB 597.pdf.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brian Darmody

Position: FAV



Building  
Communities  
of Innovation™

March 6, 2026

DC Area Headquarters  
7761 Diamondback Court  
College Park, Maryland 20740

### **SB 597: Support**

Testimony of Brian Darmody, Chief Strategy Officer, AURP

AURP is an international nonprofit membership organization of research parks and the firms that build these communities of innovation with an office in College Park, Maryland in UMD Discovery District and Tucson Arizona in U of Arizona Research Park. [www.aurp.org](http://www.aurp.org)  
Previously I was Assistant Vice President for Corporate Relations and head of government relations at UMD College Park.

SB 597 establishes the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership within the University System of Maryland, creating a single statewide hub to coordinate AI research, workforce development, industry collaboration, and responsible government adoption of AI.

Through my work nationally at AURP, I am familiar with other economic development strategies states and regions are adopting to coordinate and advance both AI and Quantum technology adoption, and I wrote a 2025 article for the Washington Business Journal urging the state to implement a coordinated strategy. SB 597 is consistent with that policy suggestion. <https://mpower.maryland.edu/viewpoint-marylands-economy-needs-help-ai-quantum-and-data-are-the-answer/>

Maryland is fortunate to have both leading efforts in AI, such as the AI Interdisciplinary Institute at UMD, <https://ai.umd.edu/>, and at other colleges and universities throughout the state including federal labs and private sector companies. The intersection of AI with quantum through new hybrid models is bringing the world class quantum ecosystem in Maryland with Maryland-headquartered ION Q and others together with AI advances.

The World Quantum Congress is coming to College Park Sept 23-25, 2026, to explore the growth of hybrid AI and quantum technology, among other topics with delegations from over 20 countries. <https://www.quantumworldcongress.com/>

It is especially fitting that Maryland demonstrates its technology advances by creating an AI coordination hub as outlined in SB 597. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the legislation does not create unfunded mandates by supporting development of classes and certifications without providing funding or resources.

Thank you.

Brian Darmody  
Chief Strategy Officer  
AURP

# **SB 597 - Higher Education - Maryland Artificial In**

Uploaded by: Jaime McCarthy

Position: FAV

March 11, 2026

Hon. Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Senate of Maryland  
**Re: Support for Senate Bill 597**

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Greater Washington Partnership, I write to express our support for SB 597, an important step toward preparing Marylanders with critical artificial intelligence (AI) skills while positioning the state as a leader in AI, cybersecurity, and emerging technology.

The Partnership is a nonprofit alliance of nearly 50 leading corporate, university, and nonprofit employers across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia committed to advancing the region's economic growth and competitiveness. Our member organizations support more than 647,000 jobs across the region, and through our Skills and Talent Initiative, we work with educators and employers to strengthen talent pipelines and expand access to training and careers that drive economic mobility. SB 597 supports this mission by aligning education and workforce programs with the technologies shaping tomorrow's economy.

The Cyber Warrior Diversity Program was created with input from cross-sector partners including Digit All City, Northrop Grumman, and the US Department of Defense to expand career-connected learning and provide students with pathways to in-demand credentials in computer networking and cybersecurity. Since its creation, Maryland's talent needs have continued to evolve, particularly as AI reshapes both the technology sector and the broader workforce. Seventy-six percent of professionals already say they need AI skills to remain competitive in the workforce<sup>i</sup>, and the Partnership's latest research indicates that AI fluency is quickly becoming a foundational capability across tech roles.

These trends underscore the importance of updating workforce and education programs to respond to emerging technologies. The Partnership's recent report, *Region Rising: Shaping Greater Washington's Economy for the Future*, highlights the need for our region to accelerate investment and innovation in high-growth sectors such as AI and other advanced technologies.<sup>ii</sup> By supporting AI training through Cyber Warrior and technology extension hubs, and by creating opportunities for universities and state agencies to collaborate through the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership, HB 597 helps accelerate responsible AI adoption, foster innovation, and strengthen the state's position in a rapidly growing sector.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 597. Thank you for your consideration and shared commitment to reducing barriers to economic mobility and opportunity, as well as making this region the best place to live, work, and build a business.

Contact:  
Emily West  
Sr. Vice President, Policy & Initiatives  
[ewest@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com](mailto:ewest@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com)

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<sup>i</sup> Deloitte: [Preparing Students for an AI-Driven Workforce](#), Jan. 2025.

<sup>ii</sup> Greater Washington Partnership: [Region Rising: Shaping Greater Washington's Economy for the Future](#), Feb. 2026.

**SB 597 FAV 3.11.2026 (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessica Stansbury

Position: FAV



**Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**  
**Senate Bill 597**  
**Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership**  
**March 11, 2026**  
**Favorable**

Good Afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, I am writing to express my support for **Senate Bill 597**. My name is Dr. Jessica A. Stansbury, and I am the director of The University of Baltimore's Center for AI Learning and Community-Engaged Innovation (CAILI) and director of teaching and learning excellence for UBalt's Center for Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Technology.

**The Center for AI Learning and Community-Engaged Innovation (CAILI)** at the **University of Baltimore (UBalt)** equips faculty, staff, students, and the Baltimore community to responsibly engage with generative AI and artificial intelligence through ethical, equitable, and interdisciplinary learning, research, and innovation. Through meaningful collaboration and community partnerships, CAILI fosters AI fluency, drives social mobility, and applies technology to solve real-world challenges.

CAILI is Maryland's only interdisciplinary AI center that bridges UBalt's Law School, College of Public Affairs, Business School, and Arts & Sciences to provide comprehensive AI expertise spanning legal compliance, workforce training, and ethical implementation. Through CAILI, we have partnered with industry to assess AI readiness and help build AI implementation pathways. Additionally, we have worked with local business and community organizations, including k-12 schools, to provide AI training and workshops.

CAILI's collaborative projects already merge academic expertise with community needs and industry innovation. The Maryland AI Partnership created by this bill provides the exact coordinating infrastructure needed to connect centers like CAILI with state agencies, local workforce boards, and the Maryland Small Business Development Center—preventing fragmentation and maximizing impact.

CAILI currently provides faculty education through interactive workshops, AI tool training, and professional learning communities. We've designed and piloted AI literacy courses adaptable for other institutions. SB597's Maryland Technology Extension Hubs would allow us to extend this proven model to small businesses and underrepresented communities across the state—providing the free AI skills training and single point of contact that Maryland's workforce desperately needs.

SB 597 will allow Maryland to leverage centers like CAILI, scale proven models, and ensure that our state's AI future is innovative, inclusive, and economically competitive. I support SB 597 and urge this committee to issue a **favorable report**.

# **Napier\_Written\_Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kollin Napier

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 597

Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership

Before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 11, 2026

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 597. I am Dr. Kollin Napier, Director of the Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN) at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. MAIN is Mississippi's coordinated statewide artificial intelligence (AI) initiative and the first of its kind in the nation. Since 2023, it has united all public higher education institutions, K-12 systems, state and local government agencies, and industry partners across Mississippi around a single, coordinated strategy to make learning more affordable, accessible, and aligned with workforce demand.

SB 597 is modeled in significant part on the MAIN framework, and Maryland is poised to replicate and build upon our proven results. The bill's Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership (new § 12-124) creates exactly the "single nexus" we established in Mississippi: connecting stakeholders, preventing fragmentation, scaling AI initiatives, leveraging federal/state/industry funding, and establishing Maryland Technology Extension Hubs. In our current development of a physical hub and the master vision to have multiple hubs around the state, these hubs will serve as single points of contact for small businesses and learners, deliver no-cost AI skills training (including cloud-based access to university computing power), and partner with community colleges, employers, and local workforce boards. These are the precise duties outlined in your bill.

The Artificial Intelligence Incubation Lab (§ 12-125) mirrors our AI Innovation Hub with the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services and Amazon Web Services (AWS): it accelerates responsible AI adoption in state agencies through prototypes, proofs-of-concept, faculty matching, and risk management while the Maryland Department of Information Technology provides policy guidance and funding support. The Center for Equitable Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Systems at Morgan State University (§ 14-111) will serve the same statewide research and coordination role we achieve through MAIN's applied ethics and equity focus. Expanding the Cyber Warrior Diversity Program to include AI training and renaming the scholarship the Emerging Technology Public Service Scholarship Program (§§ 18-

3501 et seq.) directly extends the workforce pathways we are building for high-paying AI and cybersecurity careers.

In Mississippi, this coordinated model is delivering measurable success: a single statewide AI curriculum delivered online at no cost (preventing duplication across 15+ institutions), stackable micro-credentials for working adults, embedded AI/data literacy across general education and career programs, and pipelines into manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and defense that we are establishing. We are actively working to address the enrollment cliff, shorten time-to-credential, lower per-student costs, and align education with industry needs. These actions match precisely the economic competitiveness goals stated in SB 597's preamble and aligned with the federal AI Action Plan.

The MAIN model works because it treats AI as a public-good infrastructure: shared resources reduce waste, collaboration unlocks scale, and governance ensures responsible, equitable use. SB 597 institutionalizes these same principles in Maryland. I urge the Committee to pass this forward-looking legislation. Maryland will emerge as a national leader in responsible AI workforce development and innovation.

Thank you. I am happy to answer questions and stand ready to assist Maryland's implementation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kollin Napier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Kollin R. Napier

Director, Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN)

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

For more information: <https://mainms.org/>

**SB0597\_MACC\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FWA

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**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
March 11, 2026

**SB 597 – Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership**

**Position: Favorable with Amendments**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland’s 16 community colleges, supports the goals of **SB 597** and respectfully offers several amendments to ensure that Maryland’s community colleges are fully included in the State’s artificial intelligence and emerging technology workforce strategy. Maryland’s community colleges play a critical role in preparing the State’s technology workforce. Community colleges educate and train many of the technicians, analysts, and professionals who support Maryland’s growing cybersecurity and technology sectors. As artificial intelligence continues to transform industries and create new workforce needs, community colleges will remain essential partners in expanding access to training and credentials that prepare Marylanders for these emerging careers.

MACC supports the bill’s efforts to expand workforce development in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, including the expansion of the Cyber Warrior Diversity Program and the creation of the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership and regional technology extension hubs. These initiatives present important opportunities to strengthen Maryland’s leadership in emerging technologies and expand pathways for students seeking careers in these fields.

To ensure the success of these initiatives and maximize workforce development opportunities across the State, MACC respectfully suggests several amendments. First, community colleges should have a formal role in the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership. Community colleges are key workforce development partners and should have representation in the Partnership to ensure that statewide artificial intelligence strategies reflect the full range of higher education and workforce training providers. Second, the technology extension hubs established under the bill should include meaningful partnerships with community colleges. These hubs are intended to support workforce training and connect small businesses with emerging technology resources, and community colleges are well-positioned to deliver the skills training, certificates, and credentials needed to support those goals. Third, the implementation of artificial intelligence workforce initiatives under the bill should coordinate with existing cybersecurity and emerging technology workforce development programs at Maryland community colleges. Community colleges across the State are already building strong programs in cybersecurity and related fields, and aligning these efforts with new artificial intelligence initiatives will help ensure that the State’s workforce strategy is cohesive and effective.

With these amendments, SB 597 can strengthen Maryland’s leadership in artificial intelligence while ensuring that community colleges remain central partners in preparing the State’s workforce for the future economy. For these reasons, MACC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report with **AMENDMENTS** on **SB 597**.

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

# **Senate Bill 597 - DoIT Written Testimony.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Elalamy

Position: UNF



Wes Moore | Governor  
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor  
Katie Savage | Secretary

**TO:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**FROM:** Department of Information Technology  
**RE:** Senate Bill 597 - Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership  
**DATE:** March 11, 2026  
**POSITION:** Letter of Concern

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The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman,

The Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT) respectfully submits this letter of concern regarding Senate Bill 597 - Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership.

While DoIT supports the State's continued exploration of artificial intelligence and values collaboration with Maryland's higher education institutions, several provisions in SB 597 raise operational, fiscal, and governance concerns that warrant further consideration.

First, on page 5 of the bill, SB 597 states that "the Partnership shall develop a strategic plan," but the legislation does not clearly specify which entity would be responsible for developing the plan or maintaining its required annual updates. Without clear accountability, the implementation and ongoing maintenance of the strategic plan may create ambiguity among participating entities.

Second, the work outlined in the bill would likely require multiple State agencies to invest in additional personnel identification numbers (PINs) to hire staff capable of executing the bill's requirements. This carries both fiscal and operational implications that are not fully addressed in the current language of the bill.

In addition, page 6 establishes an Artificial Intelligence Incubation Lab at the University of Maryland intended to serve State agencies. DoIT is concerned that this structure may duplicate existing efforts already underway within State government. The Department recently established an Office of Enterprise Architecture and the AI Innovation Lab, which is designed to support agencies in exploring and responsibly adopting AI technologies. We understand the proposed Lab is also exploring partnerships with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to provide AI red-team services for agencies using its platforms. At this time, DoIT does not believe it is



Wes Moore | Governor  
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor  
Katie Savage | Secretary

necessary to codify these services in statute given the existing capabilities and partnerships already being developed.

DoIT currently maintains in-house AI subject matter experts who support agencies through regular office hours, an AI community of practice, and other advisory resources that help agencies define AI use cases and identify appropriate solutions. These services address many of the functions described in the bill.

The Department also has questions regarding the rationale for providing awards over a six-year period as outlined on page 9, including how these awards would be funded throughout that duration.

More broadly, SB 597 may create significant overlap with services that are already in place within State government. Rather than accelerating AI adoption, the proposed structure may unintentionally introduce fragmentation and slow the responsible and coordinated implementation of artificial intelligence across State agencies.

For these reasons, the Department respectfully raises these concerns for the Committee's consideration and welcomes the opportunity to continue working with the General Assembly on approaches that strengthen Maryland's AI ecosystem while ensuring coordination with existing State initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Katie Savage  
Secretary  
Department of Information Technology

**SB597\_USM\_INFO.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: INFO



**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Senate Bill 597**  
**Higher Education - Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership**  
**March 11, 2026**  
**Information**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on Senate Bill 597. The bill establishes the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership to coordinate statewide collaboration in artificial intelligence research, workforce development, and innovation.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

The vision outlined in Senate Bill 597 aligns deeply with our mission and vision regarding AI. The USM strongly supports the collaborative architecture the bill imagines – a partnership in which state institutions of higher education collectively build capabilities, leverage shared expertise, and create a pipeline of AI-enabled talent for Maryland's economy. At the same time, to achieve the full promise of the legislation, adequate funding will be essential. There is no appropriation included in Senate Bill 597, yet the bill assigns responsibilities that will require new personnel, technology infrastructure, operational capacity, and sustained coordination across campuses. Without state investment, the partnership's goals cannot be met at the scale or pace the bill envisions.

Collectively, the University System of Maryland's institutions and regional higher education centers provide unmatched geographic and socio-economic reach across the State of Maryland. From Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, and from urban centers to rural communities, USM institutions serve learners at every stage of life and career. This reach is further extended through the regional higher education centers in Southern Maryland, Shady Grove, and Hagerstown, which expand access to high-quality academic programs, applied research activity, and workforce-aligned education in partnership with local employers and communities. Across all campuses and centers, USM institutions integrate teaching, research, and workforce development to meet regional needs while contributing to statewide economic growth, innovation, and social mobility. A few examples of some of the programs currently in place include:

UMBC offers a clear illustration of the opportunity – and the need. UMBC is a premier Central Maryland AI and tech hub, anchored by the [Center for Artificial Intelligence \(CAI\)](#), established in 2024 to unite 50+ faculty across AI, robotics, and machine learning. The university leverages bwtech@UMBC (a 500k+ sq ft research park) and partners with the Baltimore Region Tech Hub to drive innovation in predictive health, cybersecurity, and data science. UMBC anticipates that supporting the Maryland Artificial Intelligence Partnership’s pilot activities across three regions of the state would require approximately \$400,000 in institutional investment. This includes increased full-time staff, cloud computing resources, travel, and access devices necessary to operate the hubs and engage community partners. An additional \$100,000 would be needed to support partner USM institutions in Western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore so that the pilots can operate effectively statewide. These investments represent the foundational infrastructure required to make the partnership functional in practice, enabling regional hubs to serve as engines of workforce development, innovation, and applied research.

The University of Maryland, College Park, the State’s flagship research institution, is advancing interdisciplinary leadership in artificial intelligence through the [Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland \(AIM\)](#). AIM serves as a campus-wide hub that brings together faculty and students across all twelve colleges to advance AI research, education, and engagement, with a strong emphasis on the responsible and ethical development and use of AI for the public good. Through AIM, students across all majors gain exposure to core AI principles and their application in diverse fields, while faculty collaborate on foundational and applied research spanning areas such as machine learning, robotics, human-centered AI, and societal impacts. AIM positions the University of Maryland, College Park as a critical contributor to statewide and national efforts in AI innovation, workforce preparation, and responsible technology leadership.

The USM anticipates similar categories of need – particularly staffing, technology infrastructure, and operational support. The scale will differ by campus, but the fundamental resource requirements will be consistent. Several campuses already have significant activity and leadership in this space, demonstrating both readiness and momentum.

Towson University, for example, has become a national leader in CyberAI education, integrating artificial intelligence into cybersecurity curricula and securing AI systems to ensure they remain safe and trustworthy. Towson led the development of the first-ever guidelines for the National Security Agency’s [CyberAI Center of Academic Excellence](#) designation – work that now informs AI integration across more than 450 NSA-designated institutions nationwide. The university has also created the AI Institute, which includes an AI Clinic poised to serve as an incubation laboratory for local small businesses, community organizations, and schools seeking to adopt AI solutions responsibly. Towson stands ready to collaborate, but it too notes that meaningful participation in the partnership outlined in Senate Bill 597 will require resources.

Maryland is strongly positioned to lead the nation in artificial intelligence research, innovation, and workforce development. Senate Bill 597 reflects that ambition by outlining a solid framework for cross-sector inter-institutional collaboration. To fully realize its potential, however, the state must pair this structure with the resources needed for meaningful implementation.

Thank you for allowing the USM to provide these comments regarding Senate Bill 597.

