

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chairman, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Office Building, 2 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: In Support of Senate Bill 133 (Education - High School Students - Graduation and Attendance Credit for Vocational Training)

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, supports Senate Bill 133 (Education - High School Students - Graduation and Attendance Credit for Vocational Training).

This measure encourages high school students to explore and gain experience in career and technical training programs while still enrolled in high school. This could make a positive difference to workforce shortage occupations like construction and development, which are currently facing labor shortages. Many workers left the industry during the recession, and never returned. As older workers are retiring, no one is available to take their spots. Compounding this problem, a whole generation of younger soon-to-be workers is no longer considering residential/commercial construction as a viable career path. Many high schools have phased out shop classes, or don't encourage students to explore them, so students who might benefit from a career in the trades no longer have the opportunity to learn about them.

Home building slows without a strong labor force, keeping families from building strong communities and stunting economic progress in the State. Granting credit to high school students who pursue these vocational training programs provides an opportunity for Marylanders to learn technical trades, enter the job market, earn a sustainable income, and contribute to the economic development of the State.

MBIA respectfully requests the Committee adopt this amendment and give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members