

MARYLAND WORKFORCE A L L I N C E

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

TO: EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 4, 2020

Senate Bill 133: Education - High School Students - Graduation and
Attendance Credit for Vocational Training

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Honorable members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The Maryland Workforce Alliance (MWA) is a statewide, multi-industry membership organization representing 36 labor unions, trade associations, and apprenticeship sponsors & intermediaries. MWA was formed to advocate for an increase in state and local investment in training programs that help Marylanders acquire the skills needed to obtain jobs in high wage, high growth occupations in public and private sectors. Through our work, MWA aims to bridge the skills gap and address critical employment shortages in key fields; and forge pathways that connect employers, apprenticeship sponsors, and job seekers. MWA support policies that will help us to meet the following long term goals:

- Doubling the percent of high school graduates with marketable skills by 2025 through the expansion of high quality CTE and Youth Apprenticeship programs;
- Expanding the percentage of apprenticeship programs in Maryland to approach the average of competitor nations, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia;
- Expanding state investment in skills training to levels more comparable to current investment in college preparatory programs;
- Increasing high school students' awareness of high skill, high wage careers, and the pathways to obtaining them

A majority of our members have voted to endorse Senate Bill 133 because we believe it is a key component necessary to reach the long term goals for Career & Technical Education (CTE) and workforce development, outlined above. SB133 permits high school students to earn credit towards their high school diplomas and/or postsecondary credentials, and allows time spent in CTE programs and vocational training towards high school attendance.

Employers are eager to find qualified, highly skilled workers to close the workforce shortages in their industries. Students deserve to have access to an affordable education that meets their needs and CTE interests. SB133 addresses both of these issues by expanding opportunities for young people to complete apprenticeship programs for school credit and connects employers with the emerging workforce as they gain on-the-job training.

We are proud to offer our support for SB133 and respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

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