

MARYLAND WORKFORCE ALLIANCE



SB0795

Youth Apprenticeship 2.0 Act of 2020

Position: FAVORABLE

Madame Chair Kelly and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Leonard Lucchi, and I am the Senior Policy Advisor for the Maryland Workforce Alliance. The Maryland Workforce Alliance (MWA) is a statewide, multi-industry membership organization representing 35 labor unions, trade associations, and apprenticeship providers. 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 supports policies that will help meet the following long term goals for workforce development:

- Double the percent of high school graduates with marketable skills by 2025 through the expansion of high quality CTE and Youth Apprenticeship programs;
- Increase the percentage of apprenticeship programs in Maryland to approach the average of competitor nations, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia;
- Expand state investment in skills training to levels more comparable to current investment in college preparatory programs;

- Educate high school students about high skill, high wage careers, and the pathways to obtaining them through registered youth apprenticeships.

The Youth Apprenticeship 2.0 Act of 2020 has been endorsed by a large majority of MWA members. MWA strongly supports SB0795 because it will play a critical role in meeting the long term goals outlined above, particularly the goal of doubling the percent of high school graduates with marketable skills by 2025. Right now in Maryland, there are only 65 youth participating in registered apprenticeship programs, despite apprenticeship sponsors seeking to hire more youth apprentices. The Youth Apprenticeship 2.0 Act of 2020 will help bridge that gap. Mandating local Boards of Education to collaborate with the Department of Labor will ensure that everyone involved with expanding apprenticeships-- from employers, to unions, to students-- will have a seat at the table. These partnerships are necessary to create and expand robust apprenticeship programs coupled with essential related classroom instruction.

We encourage the committee to issue a favorable report on SB0795. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Leonard Lucchi

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