

MARYLAND WORKFORCE A L L I N C E

Testimony of Leonard L. Lucchi, Senior Advisor to Maryland Workforce Alliance on SB 926 Labor and Employment – Apprenticeships and Representation on the Apprenticeship and Training Council Act

Position: FAVORABLE

March 29, 2022

Dear Chairman C. T. Wilson and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

The Maryland Workforce Alliance is the statewide organization of labor unions, non-profits, and trade associations committed to promoting a world-class workforce in Maryland by helping to bridge the skills gap and address critical employment shortages in key fields. We strive to expand the development of registered youth apprenticeship programs, robust high school Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs, and post-high school skills training in a wide range of industries. **We fully support SB 926.**

SB 926 The Apprenticeships and Representation on the Apprenticeship and Training Council Act would positively impact many Marylanders by creating the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission tasked with expanding apprenticeship opportunities in the State, and also by requiring diversity among members of the Apprenticeship and Training Council.

SB 926 The Apprenticeships and Representation on the Apprenticeship and Training Council Act would create the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission, which will be tasked with examining and making recommendations to reduce skill shortages in high-demand occupations and provide affordable training for career pathways for young workers.

SB 926 would require an increase in the number of registered apprenticeships from 11,000 in 2021 to at least 80,000 in 2030.

Further, SB 926 would require reaching the Blueprint goal for 45% of high school graduates to complete the High School Level of a registered apprenticeship.

SB 926 also would require that the Apprenticeship and Training Council of the Division of Workforce Development include individuals who are Black and Latino to ensure a diverse membership.

Expanded access to affordable, high quality apprenticeship programs in targeted, highly in-demand fields will provide an influx of young workers with relevant skills into the State economy. Occupations or fields currently lacking enough skilled workers would expand, and new or emerging industries would benefit from a ready pool of trained and experienced workers. Maryland will receive many benefits from an expanded, skilled, and enthusiastic pool of workers who complete apprenticeships and enter the workforce ready to start adding to the State economy.

Further, and especially due to the increasing costs of higher education, many students will benefit from SB 926 since more affordable apprenticeship programs would be available to them in high-demand fields. Apprentices can enter the workforce faster, confident in their skills and with less of a financial burden from educational loans. Students unable to access educational loans would benefit from SB 926 due to expanded access to affordable apprenticeship programs.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB 926** and ask for a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Leonard L. Lucchi
Senior Advisor
Maryland Workforce Alliance
Cell: 202-422-2241