



SB121 More Opportunities for Career–Focused Students Act of 2023

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

EDUCATION, HEALTH, & ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT

Our names are Mara Babb, Subhashi Pradhan, Noor Chaudhry, and Julien Halleman, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in support of SB121 More Opportunities for Career–Focused Students Act of 2023. If passed, the bill will require school systems to establish a College and Career Readiness software to encourage apprenticeships and employment opportunities related to students’ post-secondary career interests. It will also require county boards to waive apprenticeship entrance exams and industrial certification exams in counties where similar tests are waived.

CRASC strongly supports increased college and career-focused programs for students with varying interests and all socio-economic backgrounds. With higher education becoming less accessible due to high tuition rates and many students not desiring to pursue a traditional 2-4 year college education, this bill will allow students to pursue vocational trades and have access to jobs upon graduation. This bill would allow students who qualify for financial aid for AP exams, PSAT/NMSQT, or SATs, to also receive financial aid for apprenticeship entrance exams or industrial certification exams, allowing students of all economic backgrounds to have access to such opportunities. Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) has established College and Career Readiness software that has allowed for hundreds of students per year to leave their high school with the ability to head into the workforce with the necessary credentials and experience.

This bill would also inform students of apprenticeship and employment opportunities related to their interests. In AACPS students have the opportunity to apply for career programs at the CAT centers where they are able to hone in on their interests by obtaining a rigorous education alongside competitive apprenticeships. Some may say that the demand in these programs is too low to justify an increased development, however, according to the Governor’s Office for Children, since 2004 there has been a steady increase in the percentage of graduates who completed the requirements for both the University System of Maryland and the Career and Technology Education program. This shows that students have been becoming increasingly interested in pursuing careers after high school as more students are completing career-focused programs and entering trade schools every year.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* The expansion of post-secondary resources through the employment of college counselors and opportunities such as college preparation initiatives, scholarship opportunities, and SAT preparation and administration; (Plank 3, Clause Q)
- *CRASC Supports...* Expansion of academic opportunities for all students by diversifying the curriculum; (Plank 3, Clause B)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB121.

Respectfully Submitted,

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