



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: SB 473: Pava LaPere Legacy of Innovation Act of 2024

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am pleased to write in support of Senate Bill 473. I appreciate Governor Moore for his leadership in introducing the Pava LaPere Innovation Acceleration Grant Program and the Baltimore Innovation Initiative Pilot Program which will provide funding for technology start-up companies founded by students or faculty members of higher education institutions.

Small businesses are the economic engine of our State and make our communities thrive. In 2021, we established "HoCo Higher," a transformative program providing access, resources, and fostering connecting with industry experts and budding start-up companies. Since the program launched, five cohorts of more than 60 businesses have graduated with nearly \$300,000 in grant funding for these emerging businesses. This program is not only transformational for small businesses and entrepreneurs, but it provides critical support that is required in building more opportunities for underserved markets in Howard County. We have seen firsthand benefits of this program in ensuring that our local, small, women, and minority-owned businesses can thrive and be successful.

This spirit of innovation also lies within Howard Community College as they plan their Workforce Development and Skilled Trades Center. During my annual State of the County address last year, I announced an additional \$10 million commitment in capital funding for this transformative center. It will be a beacon of innovation and increase our economic vitality statewide by providing practical training in cybersecurity, construction trades, green technology, and more. We know that our future is in our workforce.

As County Executive and a former educator, I am committed to promoting initiatives that will support students, expand economic growth and provide more opportunities for our small businesses. I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 473.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive