

Support —Written Testimony**House Appropriations Committee*****House Bill 79: Maryland Technology Internship Program - Qualifications for Participation - Alterations*****Sara C. Fidler, President**sfidler@micua.org**January 28, 2020**

On behalf of Maryland’s independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to support **House Bill 79: Maryland Technology Internship Program - Qualifications for Participation - Alterations**. This bill expands the current definition of eligible “technology-based businesses” for students who participate in the Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP). Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code could now become eligible internships sites, joining Maryland businesses, corporations, and branches of State and local government. This bill also expands MTIP’s participation criteria to include students with a 2.5-2.99 GPA. These students are currently ineligible for the program due to a 3.0 GPA cut-off.

Programs such as MTIP help the State recruit, develop, and retain top talent in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. In particular, MTIP incentivizes Maryland businesses and related organizations to invest in the education and preparation of the technical workforce and potentially build a pipeline for future employees. HB 79 opens doors to a more diverse range of internship site placements, providing students with exposure to an even greater number of technical and creative opportunities in organizations across the State—large and small, public and private. Further, internships are formative experiences for college students in their career exploration, professional development, and knowledge and skills development. Many students must work while attending college and would be unable to take an unpaid internship. MTIP internships are attractive options for students and can be important vehicles for financial support and persistence to graduation.

We appreciate Delegate Sandy Rosenberg’s vision for MTIP, the General Assembly’s ongoing support for the program, and the statewide coordination for the initiative provided by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. MICUA students have benefited and will continue to benefit from these investments, as they graduate from our institutions and join the State’s talent pipeline in technical and other STEM fields.

For these reasons, MICUA urges a favorable Committee report for HB 79.