

Written Support

Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 369: Workgroup to Study Maryland's Emerging Digital Economy

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for *Senate Bill 369: Workgroup to Study Maryland's Emerging Digital Economy*. If enacted, Senate Bill 369 would create a workgroup to create a framework for Maryland to compete effectively in the "Industry 4.0" (I-4) future. This concept focuses on how emerging technologies will affect the manufacturing industry in the future. The workgroup is charged with examining a wide range of issues—higher education curricula, professional research, public-private partnerships, apprenticeships, State grants, new tax credits, and the State's current statutory and regulatory authority over manufacturing

MICUA appreciates having representation on this workgroup and looks forward to supporting its work. Our member colleges and universities have been at the forefront of developing curricula, preparing the workforce, and bringing to bear nationally acclaimed research for the information-driven economy. It is a source of pride that we are developing the thoughtful, creative, intuitive and responsible leaders needed to take us into the I-4 era. One related example is in our preparation of cybersecurity professionals. Five MICUA member institutions have approved cybersecurity programs at the certificate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral levels: Capitol Technology University, Hood College, Johns Hopkins University, Mount St. Mary's University, and Stevenson University.

For many years, the demand for highly skilled cybersecurity workers in Maryland was fueled by Maryland's robust defense and intelligence industry, which includes numerous federal agencies, military bases, and defense contractors. More recently, this demand is fueled by the need to guard essential services, such as electric grids, banking systems, hospitals, correctional facilities, private sector business activities, and more. As a result, Maryland is experiencing a severe shortage of highly trained professionals to protect the integrity of data, communications, and intellectual property. The experience of MICUA institutions in addressing these issues will prove to be a valuable asset to the I-4 workgroup proceedings.

MICUA looks forward to participating in this worthy effort and urges a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 369.