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President & Chief Executive Officer of the National Cryptologic Museum
Foundation

Testimony in Support of

SB 753 - Labor and Employment – Workforce Development – Cybersecurity

Sponsor: Senator Hester

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs, 1:00 p.m. March 17th, 2022

Madame Chair, Vice Chairman, and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support SB 753 pertaining to Labor and Employment, Cybersecurity Workforce Development.

My name is Laura Nelson and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Cryptologic Foundation (NCF) and I serve as a member of the Maryland Cybersecurity Council on the Workforce Development Sub-committee. Also, I retired from the National Security Agency in 2018 after 37 years of service. Our mission is to educate the public on the importance of cryptology and cybersecurity in defending our nation with a focus on educating the public, especially our nation's youth. As a nationally reputed provider of assured quality cyber education resources focused on K-20 cohorts, our efforts help reduce cyber workforce deficits and current skills shortfalls, thereby promoting cyber professions as a fulfilling career choice.

Our experience shows that leveraging national level strategies, coordinating across elementary, secondary, and post secondary institutions and investing in innovative cybersecurity education programs results in students reached, parents informed, and teachers trained. Much has been accomplished but we must accelerate the pace. This bill shows that Maryland is serious about resolving its workforce gap of over 21,000 vacant cybersecurity jobs according to Cyberseek.org. Engaging industry in the cybersecurity workforce

programs leverages their expertise to enhance curriculum development, producing students with current skill sets needed today. Critical to this collaboration is developing the pathways between education institutions and employers. Our students will have a place to hone their skills and obtain competency in a safe environment on the proposed Cyber Range. Current employees who wish to transition to the cybersecurity workforce will have the opportunity to do so. Funding this accelerator program assures our students, teachers, educational institutions and industry have the resources to develop an increased number of competent individuals to fill cybersecurity jobs thereby protecting the state from the ever increasing adversarial threats and attacks.

I am in full support of SB 753 as accelerating the match between those hiring and those seeking cybersecurity jobs. As we watch world events unfold, this bill becomes even more imperative to ensuring the cyber safety of our infrastructure and citizens.

To the members of this committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to give testimony here today.