



Senate Bill 879

Job Help for All

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 28, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 879. This bill would enforce the intent of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future ("The Blueprint") that local workforce development boards receive funds dedicated to student career counseling and readiness and oversee such programs.

The Blueprint places a deeper emphasis on alternative education and workforce development – especially on career and technical education (CTE) and developing pathways for Maryland high schoolers to pursue careers instead of traditional post-secondary college or university. In fact, the education reform law prioritizes career readiness so much that it is one of the law's guiding five pillars.

One way that the Blueprint envisions doing so is by creating Local Career Counseling Agreements in each county between the local board of education, local workforce development board, and the county's community college. The law currently dictates that "Each county board [of education] shall distribute to the local workforce development board for the county..." a per pupil funding amount based on enrollment to provide career counseling and related programming.

SB 879 would require county boards of education to distribute these dedicated funds to local workforce development boards beginning in fiscal year 2025 to carry out this aspect of the Blueprint. In doing so, the legislation clarifies any confusion on which entity is to receive and manage these funds. Counties strongly agree with the Blueprint that local workforce development boards are best equipped to manage such programs, and many have already started partnering with their local workforce development boards and community colleges on CTE and career readiness.

Additionally, counties support SB 879's clarification of the per pupil funding requirements to carry out these programs and the shared costs of doing so. Counties are proud fiduciary supporters of both local workforce development boards and public schools – and many have already increased support for CTE and career readiness, outside of the obligations of the Blueprint.

SB 879 will help ensure that career readiness is prioritized in public education, as intended by the Blueprint, and will clarify expectations on the funding and operations of related programs. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 879 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.