



## House Bill 868

### *Higher Education – Community Colleges – Workforce Development Sequence Grants and Scholarships*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

**WITH AMENDMENTS**

Date: March 7, 2017

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 868 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would establish Workforce Development Sequence grants and scholarships for community college students enrolled in job preparation, licensing/certification, or job skill enhancement programs approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

This bill encourages community college training opportunities that promote workforce development, minimize the shortage of skilled workers, and raise economic opportunities in Maryland. Not only are community colleges an accessible and affordable choice for many Marylanders, they also work directly with employers to provide training for incumbent workers, and are flexible and adaptable to the needs of their local labor markets.

While MACo supports the premise of this bill, counties are cognizant of the fiscal challenges at the state level, which could make a concrete spending mandate untenable. If the Committee seeks to preserve the proposed program without the rigid funding mandate, MACo would support the following amendment:

On page 4 strike in their entirety lines 9 through 12 and substitute:

“ THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY MAY INCLUDE AN APPROPRIATION IN THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE COMMISSION TO DISBURSE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SEQUENCE GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.”

MACo supports the effort to strengthen local workforce development programs, and would support an amended bill to address potential fiscal implications at the state level. For these reasons, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 868.