Testimony of Louis M. Dubin, Chairman – Maryland Governor's Workforce Board to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, US House of Representatives, June 15, 2017

Good morning, and thank you Chairman Guthrie and members of the committee for inviting me to testify today. I am Louis Dubin, Chairman of the Maryland Governors Workforce Development Board.

The Maryland Workforce Board is made up of 53 members representing Business, Workforce, Education, Union and partner state agencies, ALL appointed by the Governor.

The Goal of the GWDB is to build partnerships and relationships that align the needs of business and job seekers through a purposeful approach with key stakeholders to support workforce and economic growth in Maryland. Inclusion, diversity, and determination are cornerstones of our success.

We have created 5 business led Taskforce Groups based on Industry Sectors to include Cyber Security/IT, Healthcare/Life Sciences, Manufacturing/Skilled Trades, Changing Demographics and Marketing/ Branding. We created an ambassador program where each of the board members had a responsibility to reach out to colleagues in their respective areas of expertise and invite them to join the conversation as part of the Taskforce. We currently have over 100 workforce stakeholders that meet to advise the Governor and make recommendations on workforce development programs and strategies targeted to specific in demand industries and populations in the state.

The GWDB built a framework to allow for collaboration and conversation among all workforce stakeholders centered around an anchor organization that has displayed best practices in a specific Industry Sector. For example, we had our Cybersecurity Taskforce hosted by NSA, which was attended by over 20 stakeholders. NSA described their recruitment process and communication with educational institutions, assessment procedures and career training programs. This type of purposeful engagement allows both government and private sector to collaborate with the state and local workforce system, Community College and University leaders to develop relevant curriculums and transfer best practices so they can become part of the workforce ecosystem.

Inclusion, diversity, and determination.

These Taskforce connections have led to employers building relationships with individual school district leaders. Together they provide K-12 school professional development to teachers, counselors, principals and parents. NOW, they can guide students and make them aware of potential opportunities to participate in Robotics competitions, Cyber competitions and exercises that can lead to a career in Cyber Security or IT. One of our State's leading non-profits, Living Classrooms, runs two charter schools and afterschool programs. recently won the divisional robotics championships with a team of inner city at risk youth, and competed and placed in an international robotics competition. Living classrooms is an example of how we can look at all of our state's resources public and private, community and faith based to provide our students with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

Living classrooms is doing wonders in Baltimore and DC, but there are also terrific examples in rural communities. Congressman Barletta, the Shine afterschool program in your district is an example of a rural afterschool partnership that is preparing our students for the future. Partnering with the Carbon Career and Technical Institute and the Lehigh Carbon Community College, Shine provides an innovative educational model by teaming technical experts with academic teachers and through hands on career projects connects students to math/science with a real world application.

Inclusion, diversity, and determination.

 In April, Governor Hogan announced Apprenticeship awards to local community partners through the Apprenticeship Innovation Fund which was developed with the US Department of Labor with a $2 million dollar grant to advance apprenticeship opportunities in Maryland.

There are many possibilities for creating opportunities to assist in the development of Apprenticeship programs not only in traditional industries such as construction and other skill trades but also by expanding into the non-traditional industries such as information technology, healthcare and cyber security.

An Example:

TranZed Apprenticeship Services, (TAS) received 2 awards to provide pre-apprenticeship services to over 200 apprentices in the Cyber and IT space. They will provide outreach services to new employers, recruit and attract new apprentices through engagement with local schools and assist job seekers with interview and technical skills. Inclusion, diversity, and determination.

As Maryland seeks to strengthen and enhance its workforce system through implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan, success requires a commitment to innovation, collaboration, and a true systems approach among the State's many workforce partners. In order to guide the WIOA Partners in this work, the Workforce Partners have created benchmarks that set a clear vision, goals, and measureable achievements that help define success and lay the core foundation of this new system. The five benchmarks of success are:

1. Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to employment.
2. Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to, and use of, skills and credentialing.
3. Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to, and use of, life management skills.
4. Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by eliminating barriers to employment through the use of supportive services.
5. Strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system.

These goals and corresponding benchmarks are focused around a central vision of increasing the earning capacity of Marylanders. These goals and benchmarks are not mere measures but rather provide a way of thinking systematically about how we deliver services. They reflect Maryland's dedication to focusing its efforts on people who need the system's assistance the most. The 5 strategic goals and coinciding benchmarks outlined in this document intentionally set a high bar and are meant to be used as a leadership tool, guiding strategic conversations and defining a set of achievements for the workforce system to commit to and strive toward in our collective work to improve the lives of Marylanders.

My view is that the economic development discussion should center on how to better align the student pipeline with business needs. We need to explore ways to engage middle and high school students in work study programs such as internships and apprenticeship programs to allow them the opportunity to experience what they want to do and are really good at.

Digital Harbor in Maryland is doing just this. In this afterschool program youth have access to advanced courses in fabrication, programming, electronics, and more. Members are also offered opportunities that reach beyond the Tech Center into the local community and active technology fields such as college credit, and internships.

In Maryland, the GWDB has established a Changing Demographics Taskforce that works with specific populations to engage them in specific state training and apprenticeship programs, connects them to college and university programs, and brings awareness to employers.

A recent example was when the GWDB co-sponsored, in partnership with a local University, a summit focused on Neuro–Diversity in the workforce. NSA participated on the panel to explore the career path for individuals on the autism spectrum. Inclusion, diversity, and determination.

In conclusion, the Maryland Governor's Workforce Development Board continues to be at the forefront of best practices, relying on inclusion, diversity, and determination to develop Maryland's workforce and provide a better life for its citizens.