



Senate Bill 981

Local Cybersecurity Preparedness and Local Cybersecurity Support Fund - Alterations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Energy, Education, and the Environment
and Budget and Taxation Committees

Date: March 7, 2024

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 981 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill generally modifies and expands the purpose of the Local Cybersecurity Support Fund. MACo requests amendments to bolster support for local cybersecurity efforts and ensure a strategic, coordinated, and flexible approach to enhancing cybersecurity preparedness across the state.

A strong partnership between the State and local governments is essential for safeguarding critical infrastructure and defending against increasingly complex cyber risks. MACo urges the General Assembly to provide a meaningful and lasting state commitment to bolster cybersecurity and prioritize cyber resilience through collaborative efforts to identify, protect against, detect, and respond to malicious cyber threats.

This bill authorizes the governor to include in the annual budget bill for fiscal 2026 and 2027 an appropriation of \$10 million to the Local Cybersecurity Support Fund, requires the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to provide sufficient information security officers to assist the director of Local Cybersecurity in the execution of their duties, and mandates that local school systems implement specified cybersecurity measures.

Hackers are increasingly targeting states and local governments with sophisticated cyberattacks. Securing government information systems is critical, as a cyber intrusion can be very disruptive, jeopardizing sensitive information, public safety, and delivering essential services. As such, MACo urges the General Assembly to mandate the allocation of needed resources to help lead local governments, school systems, and critical infrastructure toward a more cyber-secure future.

Further, while MACo appreciates the bill's intent to provide direct financial assistance to local governments to improve cybersecurity preparedness, some local governments could benefit from DoIT providing direct support services like shared service agreements, 24/7 network monitoring, real-time incident response, statewide risk assessments, and training. As such, MACo requests that the Fund be available for direct financial assistance and state-provided services to ensure an equitable approach to cyber preparedness and resilience across Maryland.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 981.