JOINT COMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY JOINT COMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

2024 Interim

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

December 19, 2024

THE MARYLAND GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

December 19, 2024

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Co-Chair
Members of the Legislative Policy Committee

Dear President Ferguson, Speaker Jones, and Members:

The Joint Committee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Biotechnology respectfully submits this summary report of its 2024 interim activities. The joint committee held three meetings focused on cybersecurity, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence (AI) in education.

At the first meeting on September 4, the joint committee met jointly with the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee (JAEC) to satisfy requirements established under Chapter 497 of 2024 (Senate Bill 982). Chapter 497 required JAEC, in consultation with the joint committee, to study and make recommendations for any statutory or operational changes necessary to address findings in the audit of the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) issued in April 2024 by the Office of Legislative Audits (OLA). The meeting included a presentation on the history of DoIT, a review of the requirements established under Chapter 497, a review of the audit by OLA, and a presentation by DoIT regarding the audit's findings. In addition, the joint committees met in closed session to discuss the audit's specific findings regarding cybersecurity issues at DoIT. For additional information regarding this meeting, including any recommendations made by JAEC and the joint committee, please refer to JAEC's summary letter of its 2024 interim activities to the Legislative Policy Committee.

At the second meeting on September 25, the joint committee heard from presenters regarding (1) an overview of biotechnology in agriculture; (2) a summary of biotechnology in health care; and (3) the future of biotechnology.

- Representatives from Bioenergy Devco, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), and F3 Tech provided an overview of biotechnology in agriculture in the State. Bioenergy Devco described its process for transforming food waste into renewable energy and other materials. MDA discussed the Animal Waste Technology Fund and its role in providing grants to advance the adoption of technologies to reduce animal waste and produce renewable energies. F3 Tech presented on how it invests in early- and late-stage biotechnology companies. Each presenter also discussed how Maryland can strengthen its position among other states to attract new biotechnology companies and investment to the State.

- The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) presented on biotechnology in the health care sector in the State. GBC discussed how Maryland acts as a technology hub due to its proximity to several federal agencies, universities, and research laboratories. Among other findings, GBC noted that though the State is strong with providing early-stage funding for biotechnology companies, more is needed to provide financial support to middle-stage companies so they remain in Maryland.

- The Department of Commerce and the Maryland Tech Council presented on the future of biotechnology in the State. Generally, the presenters discussed the challenges facing the biotechnology industry in the State, the impact of State support to the biotechnology industry, and how the State can further invest in its biotechnology workforce. In addition, the presenters identified sectors within the biotechnology industry where the State can become a national leader.

At the third meeting on December 11, the joint committee heard from presenters regarding the use and best practices of AI in education. The joint committee also heard from DoIT and received an update of its activities over the past year.

- The first panel, comprised of representatives from the Southern Regional Education Board, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the Colorado Department of Education, discussed best practices of the use of AI in education. The panelists provided an overview of how AI tools can help students create work promoting critical thinking and enhance collaborative creativity. The panelists also advised that clear guidance on the use of AI is necessary so educators, administrators, and policymakers can balance the opportunities that come with the use of AI with ethical and pedagogical concerns.

- The second panel included representatives from the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland and representatives from the Baltimore, Harford, Prince George's, and Howard County public school systems. The panelists discussed how AI is used in local classrooms, including curriculum and lesson development and how interactive student projects are developed. The

representatives from the local public school systems also discussed how their individual school systems are implementing AI in their classrooms.

- DoIT provided a general annual update to its activities over the past year. Among other things, DoIT discussed its organizational growth, how the department is developing guidelines for the use of AI in State government, its digital modernization efforts, and the department's activities regarding cybersecurity.

Please contact us if you have any questions concerning the joint committee's activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Fry Hester
Senate Chair

Anne R. Kaiser
House Chair

KFH:ARK/TE/bal

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