**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE AND
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 1563 -- PUBLIC HEALTH – MARYLAND INFANT LIFETIME CARE TRUST FUNDED
BY HSCRC AND MARYLAND PATIENT SAFETY CENTER DUTIES**

March 9, 2020

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

House Bill 1563 establishes the Maryland Infant Lifetime Care Trust (Trust) to pay for the costs of medical and supportive care for individuals who suffer a neurological injury during birth. The bill provides guaranteed coverage for the lifetime care needs as determined by their physician to be paid for by the Trust, which would be funded by Maryland hospitals that deliver babies. The bill would also allocate $1 million annually to improve fetal outcomes in Maryland.

The GBC supports House Bill 1563 because it provides a common sense solution for the needs of the families of children who suffer a neurological injury during birth. Additionally, the bill acknowledges the importance of one of the leading employment sectors in the Greater Baltimore region. Hospitals are one of Maryland's most important economic drivers, providing not only jobs and economic activity, but the ability to deliver some of the best health care in the world. According to the Maryland Hospital Association, Maryland hospitals account for nearly eight percent of the State's gross domestic product, employ nearly 108,000 people and indirectly support an additional 120,000 non-hospital jobs, accounting for eight percent of the State's total employment in Maryland.

The GBC believes that an important priority for policymakers is enhancing the ability of hospitals to compete in an increasingly competitive health care market. Passage of House Bill 1563 would be an important step to ensuring Maryland's hospitals are able to stay competitive and continue providing their vital services to Marylanders.

Hospitals have been increasingly concerned with the liability climate in Maryland and its potential impact on access to care. Recent events, such as a $229.6 million medical malpractice verdict against Johns Hopkins, and the decision of some liability insurers to exit Maryland, have brought this issue to the forefront. Under Maryland's current system, when infants are injured at birth, families may turn to the courts to ensure coverage of their child's future medical costs and hold doctors and hospitals accountable. However, families have to rely on whatever amount juries determine will be needed to care for the complex, lifelong health challenges of an infant with birth injuries. In some cases the amount may be insufficient while in other cases there are awards that could potentially destabilize the healthcare system in Maryland, leading to higher costs and impacting the availability of maternity care.

House Bill 1563 is consistent with a key tenet in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland,* a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth:

> **Competitive costs of doing business.** Public policies must reflect a government predisposition to nurture business growth and to avoid arbitrarily or disproportionately imposing additional overhead upon the business sector.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 1563.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 65-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.