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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Bill 710 –State and Local Government and Private employers - Teleworking

February 25, 2021

Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

COVID-19 has forced many changes in our lives, and one of those changes was how government entities and private employers conducted their businesses. Teleworking provided government agencies way to ensure continuance of government and it offered private employers a way to conduct their businesses in a safe manner.

By allowing so many employees to telework in Maryland and the surrounding region, employers have been able to minimize health risks for employees and their families. And along with minimizing health risks we have also experienced the added benefit of less cars on the roads, less congestion on our highways and the correlating reduction in greenhouse gases.

Senate Bill 710 takes in to account all of the positives that we have seen from teleworking and will require state and local governing bodies to maintain a telework program. This bill expands the current requirement for Executive Branch State agencies to implement a telework program to the Legislative and Judicial Branches of state government. And it further requires all branches to maximize the number of eligible employees that could telework, removing the prior Executive Branch goal of 15%.

Senate Bill 710 further provides intent language that encourages private-sector employers to develop and implement telework policies for their businesses. And while not mandated, the intent language speaks to authorizing a tax credit to assist private-sector employers in offsetting costs incurred for the development and implementation of a telework policy.

We have learned many lessons during this pandemic and the benefits and successes of teleworking is just one of those lessons and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 710.