



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 502 – OFFICE OF THE STATE’S ATTORNEY –
COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF PROSECUTORIAL INFORMATION

Sponsor: Delegate Crutchfield

February 12, 2021

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support with Amendments

House Bill 502 requires each State’s Attorney’s office to collect information about each case it has considered and send it to the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. The information required includes case identification information, demographical information about the defendant, details about the charges, the specific prosecutor, any offers of diversion, recommendations on bail or bond, and a number of other issues. The bill also requires a number of very specific office policies to be shared and updated regularly.

The GBC’s 2021 Legislative Priorities specifically includes a call to improve public safety through enhanced coordination among criminal justice agencies, implementation of comprehensive violence reduction strategies, and coordinated re-entry services. Specifically, there is a need to improve public accessibility to judicial data to increase transparency.

Consistent with this priority, the GBC supports the intent of the legislation, but we are concerned that the information requested would require significant administrative time expended, that much of the information particularly regarding office policies are burdensome and would be difficult to keep up to date.

The GBC urges the committee to consider amendments that would minimize the information that is requested but would still meet the desire to “improve public accessibility to judicial data to increase transparency.” We would recommend that the reporting requirements only include the basic needed information about each case. If, after time, it is determined that more information is needed, the requirements could be expanded at a later time.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges the committee to give House Bill 502 a favorable report with amendments to limit the scope of the information required.

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 66-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.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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