

**HB0122 General Provisions Commemorative Month Small Business Month**

Date of Hearing: Thursday, March 14, 2024

Org Committees & Hearing: Health and Government Operations

Testimony of: Sharon Brown, Founder/CEO  
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**TESTIMONY ON HB#122 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**General Provisions Commemorative Month Small Business Month**

**TO:** Madame Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and  
members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** Sharon Brown

**OPENING:** As a resident of District 14 and the founder of the 501(c) Black Enterprise Resource Center (BERC.org), I have a personal stake in the success of Small businesses. I am submitting this testimony in support of General Provisions Commemorative Month for Small Business, a cause that is close to my heart.

Small businesses are not just a part of Maryland's economy, they are the heart of it. Supporting HB 122, a bill that aims to commemorate and recognize small businesses means supporting 99.5% of all businesses in Maryland. This staggering number underscores the immense impact of small businesses on our state's economy.

According to data from the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses in Maryland make up 99.5% of all businesses in the state, employing over 1.1 million people. This accounts for 49.5% of the state's workforce and highlights the significant contribution of small businesses to Maryland's economy.

Small businesses are not just numbers in the budget, they are the ones who provide the services and products that enrich the lives of Maryland residents. From professional services to construction, small businesses are the ones who make our lives better. Last year alone, they added nearly 228,000 jobs to Maryland's economic growth, showing their vital role in job creation and employment opportunities for local communities.

In addition to job creation, small businesses also contribute significantly to the state's GDP. In 2019, small businesses in Maryland added 32% or 3.7 billion dollars to the state's economy. This is a substantial amount and highlights the power of small businesses to drive economic growth and prosperity.

The impact of small businesses on Maryland's economy cannot be overstated. They play a crucial role in creating jobs, generating revenue, and fostering innovation. Small businesses also contribute to the overall vibrancy and diversity of the state's economy.

Therefore, it is essential to support initiatives like HB 122, which aims to commemorate small businesses for a month. By doing so, we are not only helping these businesses thrive but also investing in the future of Maryland's economy.

Moreover, supporting small businesses means supporting diversity and inclusivity in the business world. BERC, as an organization, recognizes the unique challenges and barriers that Black entrepreneurs and businesses face. Through its various programs and resources, BERC is dedicated to breaking down these barriers and creating a more equitable playing field for all businesses.

In conclusion, the numbers speak for themselves when it comes to the impact of small businesses in Maryland. The state's economy thrives because of the hard work and dedication of small business owners. Therefore, my position is favorable, and it is crucial to support initiatives like HB 122, which will provide much-needed assistance to small businesses in Maryland. By doing so, we are not only investing in the growth and success of these businesses but also the prosperity of our communities and state as a whole. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB #122