

HB1253-EEE-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB1253

March 26, 2025

TO: Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 1253 - Department of Social and Economic Mobility - Established

POSITION: Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on House Bill (HB) 1253.

HB 1253 creates a new department and special fund under the executive branch of Maryland state government, the Department of Social and Economic Mobility [Special Fund], that houses the Office of Minority Business Enterprises, the Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs, and the Office of Social Equity. The department will serve to advance social equity programs and initiatives in the state including small/disadvantaged business support, cannabis participation by communities impacted by the war on drugs, and other policies as created at the state level. This department will ensure the mission of the aforementioned offices to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the state economy is adequately staffed, funded, supported, and positioned to make meaningful impact.

The legislation will aid eligible residents in the state by connecting them to programs that assist in their upward socioeconomic mobility. These programs are administered by the aforementioned offices and will be reviewed and regulated by the department for effectiveness. The establishment of the department should facilitate improved cooperation between the offices to their individual benefit because of their shared general purpose. The special fund will ensure the offices are capable of being fully staffed and carrying out their economic equity programs to the benefit of residents' equity. This renewed commitment to the socio-economic equity of Maryland residents is especially prescient amid efforts to fully defund and divest from all equity initiatives and/or offices throughout the country. The passage of this legislation will signal to Maryland residents who have been historically underrepresented and excluded from the state's economy that Maryland has not abandoned them, their businesses, or their communities.

Due to the reasons stated above, the Baltimore City Administration respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on House Bill 1253.

2025_03_26 HB 1253 Support with Amendments.pdf

Uploaded by: Tiffany Clark

Position: FWA

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**STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL**

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

March 26, 2025

TO: The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 1253 – Department of Social and Economic Mobility -
Established – **Support with Amendments**

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports **House Bill 1253** – Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility– Established sponsored by Speaker Adrienne Jones with amendments. **House Bill 1253** establishes the Maryland Department of Social Equity, which, among other responsibilities, would assist individuals in Maryland by connecting them to appropriate social equity programs and resources, advise State agencies on issues of social equity, develop innovative social equity-related recommendations, policies, practices, and programs for the State, and conduct analyses of the effectiveness of various social-equity programs.

Maryland is currently the most diverse state on the East Coast, and home to three of the nation’s most diverse cities.¹ Because this diversity is one of Maryland’s greatest assets—one that should be fostered and supported by the State and its various agencies—the OAG is committed to promoting equity as one of its core values and guiding principles. This commitment is reflected in Attorney General Brown’s newly established Office of Equity, Policy, and Engagement which is focused on developing innovative, equity-centered strategies to advance the Office’s priorities. Social equity seeks to scale these same principles, with the National Academy of Public Administration defining social equity as “the fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and

¹ See: <https://business.maryland.gov/why-maryland/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.”²

Social equity programs and practices broadly support Marylanders by: ensuring compliance with State and federal nondiscrimination laws; dismantling structural and institutional barriers to equal opportunity; redressing the impact of historically discriminatory laws and policies; fostering a culture of innovation and creative problem-solving; and promoting respect, understanding, and the celebration of diverse perspectives.

The need for State-level action and elevation in support of social equity is greater than ever. In establishing the Department of Social Equity, the OAG welcomes a State agency dedicated to this issue who can collaborate with our Office and other stakeholders to advance the critical work of promoting fairness, justice, and equity in State government and State-regulated activities.

For these reasons, the OAG urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable with amendments report on **House Bill 1253**. The amendments clarify the legal advisory relationship between the Department of Social and Economic Mobility and the OAG.

OAG Amendments to House Bill 1253

On page 9, in line 21, after “(B)” insert “**(1)**”; in line 25, strike “(C)” and substitute “**(2)**”; and after line 26, insert:

“(C) (1) THE COUNSEL TO THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE NO DUTY OTHER THAN TO GIVE THE LEGAL AID, ADVICE, AND COUNSEL REQUIRED BY THE SECRETARY AND ANY OTHER OFFICIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT, TO SUPERVISE THE OTHER ASSISTANT ATTORNEYS GENERAL ASSIGNED TO THE DEPARTMENT, AND TO PERFORM FOR THE DEPARTMENT THE DUTIES THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ASSIGNS.”

(2) THE COUNSEL SHALL PERFORM THESE DUTIES SUBJECT TO THE CONTROL AND SUPERVISION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

(3) AFTER THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DESIGNATES THE COUNSEL TO THE DEPARTMENT, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY NOT REASSIGN THE COUNSEL WITHOUT CONSULTING THE SECRETARY.”

² See: https://web.archive.org/web/20090506083627/http://napawash.org/aa_social_equity/index.html

2025 HB1253 Testimony Against 2025-03-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against HB1253

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable report against HB1253.

I am against

- **Establishing the Department of Social and Economic Mobility;**
- providing for the Secretary of Social and Economic Mobility;
- providing the purpose of the Department is to provide support for units of State government, individuals, and businesses **for the maintenance of social equity policies in the State;**
- establishing the Department of Social and Economic Mobility Special Fund; and
- **requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill a certain appropriation from the Transportation Trust Fund to the Fund.**

At a time when the State faces a multi-billion dollar deficit, I believe the State should not be creating a new department for any reason. Supposedly, there is not enough money to fund the departments that already exist.

I believe you should be cutting back the size of the state government instead of finding additional ways to tax us to fund the expansion of the government.

Also, the State should not be funding the increase of social equity policies at a time when the Federal government is threatening to cut back on funding those states that continue to push diversity, equity and inclusion.

Finally, I have heard so much testimony that we need to increase taxing and increase fees because the transportation fund does not have enough money to maintain our roads and bridges. Yet, this bill would rob the transportation fund to pay for this new department.

Please be fiscally responsible and enter an unfavorable report against HB1253

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March 26, 2025