



MARYLAND
Chamber of Commerce

LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 851

Partnership for Workforce Quality Program - Alterations

House Economic Matters Committee

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Dear Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 4,500 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees and families.

Small businesses are the driving force for job creation, and our entire state benefits when our small businesses succeed. Small businesses are an integral part our work at the Maryland Chamber, and our efforts affect no other group more drastically. In addition, our state's overall success in the global marketplace is directly tied to Maryland's ability to foster a competitive and favorable climate for small businesses, a sector that makes up almost 92 percent of the state's registered companies.

The Partnership for Workforce Quality Program (PWQ), administered by the Maryland Department of Commerce, exists to provide training services to improve the competitiveness and productivity of the State's workforce and business community, upgrade employee skills for new technologies or production processes, and assist employers located in Maryland in promoting employment stability.

HB 851 will expand the purpose of the PWQ to include the training of new employees while also increasing the amount of program funding specifically reserved for small businesses, from 60% to 80%. Additionally, HB 851 expands the universe of businesses eligible to participate in the program to those with 500 employees, up from 150 employees. Finally, the bill further limits the amount of funds that may be used by businesses with more than 500 employees from 20% of the available funds to the maximum amount of \$200,000.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce recognizes that small businesses can feel the impacts of a changing business climate disproportionately more than larger, more traditional companies. Therefore, we fully support all measures aimed at supporting our small businesses--the lifeblood of Maryland's economy.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **favorable report** on **HB 851**.

MDCHAMBER.ORG

60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis 21401 | 410-269-0642