



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 521 -- MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - ESTABLISHMENT

February 20, 2020

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

House Bill 521 establishes the Maryland Small Business Innovation Research Technical Assistance Program in the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO). The purpose of the program is to provide technical assistance to small businesses in Maryland by: (1) encouraging small businesses, including economically disadvantaged businesses, to apply for grants under the federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs; and (2) provide grant applicants with technical assistance, including training assistance and assessments through the early phases of development. The purpose of the federal SBIR and STTR grants are to foster job creation and economic development by promoting the commercialization of research conducted by small business and facilitating tech transfer from small businesses.

The SBIR and STTR programs are one of the largest sources of early-stage capital for technology commercialization in the United States. These programs allow small businesses to engage in federal research and development that has a strong potential for commercialization. As an example of the programs' impact, in federal Fiscal Year 2018 the National Institute of Health's SBIR and STTR programs invested over one billion dollars into health and life science companies that are creating innovative technologies. By providing technical assistance, including training assistance and assessments during a small business' early development stages, House Bill 521 enhances the opportunities for an innovative business to survive and become successful. In an increasingly competitive global environment, Maryland businesses benefit from focused State investments.

This bill is consistent with one of the key tenets in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth:

Strategic and effective investments in business growth. The State must commit to substantive strategic investments, leveraged with capital assets, to nurture business and job growth. Investments should include competitive and effective tax credits, business development incentives, and tactical initiatives to nurture private investments in industry growth.

Additionally, the GBC's 2020 Legislative Priorities state that an important priority is to support "... strategic and effective state investments in initiatives that promote business growth and job creation." House Bill 521 is consistent with this priority by creating an investment for Maryland's most innovative and promising startup companies.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 521.

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 65-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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