

SB0647. 02.17.21Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding.Re

Uploaded by: Fry, Donald

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 647 – Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding - Report

Sponsor: Senator King

February 17, 2021

DONALD C. FRY

PRESIDENT & CEO

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 647, which would require the Department of Budget and Management to provide a report on federal COVID-19 relief funding. This report would detail the allocation of all funding provided by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act. It will also identify any unmet funding needs of the State in responding to the pandemic; and establish a plan to allocate additional federal funding received by the State. The report would have to be submitted on or before March 15, 2021 to both the Senate Budget and Taxation and House Appropriations committees.

The GBC identified five key legislative priorities for the Maryland General Assembly 2021 legislative session. SB 647 closely aligns with two of those five priorities:

- 1) **Advocate for policy, funding, and regulatory solutions to accelerate economic recovery with an emphasis on support for small and minority-owned businesses, and**
- 2) **Advocate for inclusive policies and programs that strengthen economic competitiveness and job creation.**

This reporting bill achieves both of these goals by promoting legislative oversight into the allocation process of federal coronavirus relief. It would highlight the positive and negative aspects of the aid distribution and would allow for an informed legislature to adequately target areas that need additional aid. Maryland businesses have suffered tremendous losses during this crisis; remaining informed on the status of federal aid distribution will stimulate the quickest path to their recovery.

In the Greater Baltimore Committee report *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, eight core pillars were identified for a competitive business environment. An essential pillar is **strategic and effective state investments in business growth**. The first step in achieving strategic and effective growth is identifying target areas that require extra consideration through policy, funding, and other forms of aid. This bill would be instrumental in allowing the state to determine ways in which Maryland can most effectively help its businesses recover from the pandemic.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 647.

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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2021-02-17 SB 647 (Support).pdf

Uploaded by: Jung, Roy

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February 17, 2021

To: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

From: Office of the Attorney General

Re: SB0647 – Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding – Report (Support)

The Office of Attorney General submits this written testimony urging the Budget and Taxation Committee to favorably report SB 647, Senator King's bill to require the Department of Budget and Management to provide a report on the federal COVID-19 relief funding, to include funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 funding on or before March 15, 2021. The required report will require disaggregated data on the allocation of such funding.

Senate Bill 647 is a good-faith effort to provide transparency and accountability with respect to the allocation of COVID-19 relief funding. If enacted, it will serve to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 647.

cc: Committee Members

SB647 Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: King, Senator Nancy

Position: FAV

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 647 – Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding – Report
EMERGENCY BILL**

February 17, 2021

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Under the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Securities Act; and the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, there is and will be a significant influx of federal dollars to the State of Maryland. Legislative Services reported in their January 2021 fiscal briefing that this amount should ultimately be over \$1.4 Billion.

Senate Bill 647 will require the Department of Budget and Management to provide a report to Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Appropriations Committee on or before March 15, 2021. The report should take account of:

- All federal COVID–19 relief funding received by the State or a political subdivision of the State;
- any federal COVID–19 relief funding received by the State or a political subdivision of the State for which the State or political subdivision was authorized to exercise any discretion in how the funding is spent;
- any additional COVID–19–related funding needs to which the Governor will prioritize any federal funding received by the State under federal legislation passed after the preparation of the report.

The report should include:

- The total amount of federal COVID–19 relief funding distributed to the State and each political subdivision of the State;
- detailed information on the federal COVID–19 relief funding allocated to a State program; to a program administered by a political subdivision of the State; to the State but not allocated to a State program; and provided to a political subdivision of the State but not allocated to a program administered by a political subdivision of the State;

- the total amount of federal COVID–19 relief funding for which the State may exercise any discretion as to how the funds are allocated for use;
- the criteria used to allocate the funding;
- the programs and purposes for which funding was allocated;
- the total amount of federal COVID–19 relief funding available to the State or a political subdivision of the State that has not been provided by the federal government and the reasons why the funding has not been provided.

The report should also identify any unmet funding needs of the State in responding to the 29 COVID–19 pandemic; and establish a plan to allocate additional federal funding received by the State.

This legislation will require the transparency and accountability that Marylanders deserve as these federal dollars are spent throughout the state and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 647.

COVIDReliefReportingAct--AFTsupport.pdf

Uploaded by: Reynolds, Todd

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony from American Federation of Teachers-Maryland
Submitted by Todd Reynolds, Ph.D., Political Coordinator
SB 647 - Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding – Report
Before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 17, 2021**

SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. AFT-Maryland is the state federation of numerous state, municipal, and public education labor unions throughout Maryland, representing thousands of public employees who have been providing vital services to Maryland residents in the middle of this pandemic. As such, we call for a favorable report to SB 647, the bill that would require a more thorough and detailed account of federal relief funds allotted to and spent by the state and its local subdivisions meant to help those entities maintain the services Maryland needs to weather the COVID-19 crisis.

No one can contest the fact that this pandemic has been both a public health and economic crisis. The nature of this disease—how easily it spreads throughout the community through contact with others, and how devastating it is to people’s short and long-term health—has, rightfully, caused us all to be more cautious about everyday activities. The slowdown of economic transactions has certainly hurt state and local government’s ability to generate the revenues needed to maintain basic services to its residents; under that context, the multiple relief packages passed over the past year by the Federal Government—including the \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus package under the CARES Act passed last March—have staved off complete economic collapse.

Despite this record aid provided by the federal government—including \$1.29 billion in CARES Act aid to the state and \$691 million to its largest counties—public employees at every level of government in this state have been constantly threatened with layoffs, furloughs, and salary reductions because management has said that these funds were not enough to cover revenue losses.

When asked to provide details of how these federal funds that were designed to help state and local governments prevent these catastrophic measures were being allocated, our unions have received only very basic, rudimentary summaries of those expenditures; not enough to conduct a thorough analysis of the efficacy and efficiency of the use of those taxpayer dollars, and certainly not enough to justify the layoff, furlough, or reduction in compensation for any public employee in the state.

Members of the committee, the level of aid provided to Maryland and its jurisdiction has been without precedent. This bill would require DBM to provide the details our public workers and residents must have in order to account for the incredible amount of dollars coming from Washington to our state.

There simply has not been another time when such aid has been needed or given to our state by the federal government, and as such, a greater level of transparency is required to assure our residents and employees that this money is being spent fairly and efficiently. We call for a favorable report of SB 647.