



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 772 – SMALL BUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF ACT OF 2021

Sponsor – Senator Hester

February 24, 2021

DONALD C. FRY

PRESIDENT & CEO

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 772, which creates several programs to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19, including a loan program, a grant program, and a business assistance program.

- The Maryland COVID-19 Emergency Loan program would provide eligible small businesses with less than 50 full-time employees an interest-free loan for at least 12 months, and does not require the borrower to provide collateral.
- The Maryland COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program would permit counties to obtain funds to provide grants to eligible small businesses that do not employ more than 15 full-time employees.
- The Maryland COVID-19 Business Recovery Assistance Program would be created as a part of the Small Business Development Center Network (SBDC Network). The SBDC Network would provide eligible small businesses participating in the program access to business support services to assist the small business to recover from economic hardships brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, including access to financing and professional services.

The GBC has been actively involved in supporting businesses as they weather the ill effects of the pandemic, restrictions limiting business operations, and the resulting negative economic impact on the business. To address the challenges and to help businesses recover, the Greater Baltimore Committee created the GBC COVID-19 Business Recovery Advisory Council. The advisory council, comprised of business executive of Baltimore regional businesses, was formed to provide assistance, create programs and make policy recommendations to benefit small and minority-owned businesses.

One of the advisory council's major recommendations identified the importance of promoting and supporting efforts to increase access to capital for small and minority-owned businesses, including both traditional and non-traditional capital sources. Senate Bill 772 would provide small and minority business owners with access to capital during a very difficult business cycle.

Senate Bill 772 is also consistent with the GBC's *2021 Legislative Priorities*, which calls for policy, funding, and regulatory solutions to accelerate economic recovery with an emphasis on support to small and minority-owned businesses. The creation of a loan program, a grant program, and a technical assistance program to benefit Maryland's small and minority-owned businesses will provide much needed assistance to businesses to recover from the negative economic impact brought by the coronavirus pandemic and keep countless small and minority-owned businesses viable.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 772.

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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