



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 653

Joint Committee on Workforce Development

House Economic Matters Committee

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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 recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families. Part of our work includes developing a workforce and talent pipeline that ensures Maryland's continued economic expansion.

House Bill 653 establishes a Joint Committee on Workforce Development to 1) evaluate the condition of Maryland's public- and private-sector workforces; (2) monitor workforce skills shortages; (3) identify strategies to expand employment opportunities and increase income for Marylanders through workforce skills policies; (4) monitor workforce educational training; and (5) review and evaluate the effectiveness of relevant programs, policies, and practices, including career and technology education (CTE) programs and apprenticeship programs. This committee would then have review over (1) CTE programs; (2) workforce programs under the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC); (3) the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program; (4) the Governor's Workforce Development Board; and (5) other workforce development programs in the state.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce supports the goals and initiatives outlined in HB 653, and we are actively participating in many of the areas specified by the legislation. Through the Maryland Chamber Foundation, we are engaged in initiatives including business education on workforce best practices, talent pipeline support, workforce development needs and establishing partnerships between businesses and schools to support underserved communities in career-focused education, licensure, CTE, apprenticeships and more¹. We look forward to sharing what we've learned in each of these areas with the Joint Committee on Workforce Development, and

¹ <https://mdchamber.org/foundation/workforce-development/>

to working together to remove barriers and increase access to quality workforce development and talent pipeline opportunities. For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully request a **favorable report** on HB 653.

