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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Delegate Testimony in Support of HB 1424**

**Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition**

1. Delegate Robbyn Lewis Letter of Support
2. HB1424 Factsheet



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**Sponsor Testimony - HB 1424**  
**Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition**

Dear Chairman Wilson and Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 1424.

HB1424 will establish an 18-member workgroup that will make recommendations to adjust our economic development strategies resulting from significant changes, challenges, and crises in a variety of sectors.

The COVID-19 workgroup will consist of diverse members with expertise in labor, business, nonprofit, transportation, commerce, and housing and community development sectors. Together, with Maryland legislators, they can collaborate on vital solutions to lead the state towards strengthening systems of economic security and development. The workgroup will be chaired by and includes funding for the best and brightest at the University of Maryland to staff the workgroup and conduct research to answer key questions. The workgroup will submit an interim report to the General Assembly by Dec. 1, 2022 and final recommendations by Dec 1, 2023.

While it seems we are emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic setback our communities have experienced proves the necessity to strategize next steps to improve Maryland's economic development. From supply chain management and small businesses to online education, childcare, and telehealth, a variety of our sectors have had to pivot in crisis and some fared better than others.

The economic impacts – such as closed businesses and rising inflation indicators – are often most impactful to marginalized communities, including those in poverty and people of color. According to an independent, nonpartisan think tank Georgia Center for Opportunity, Maryland ranks 11<sup>th</sup> most severe in pandemic impact on employment and work<sup>1</sup>. To ensure economic recovery and prepare for the next crisis, we need to carefully invest in our communities and areas of growth in order to build an economic future that is more inclusive and equitable. The time to act is now to ensure we support businesses taking the next 2-3 year to recover from economic losses.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1424.

<sup>1</sup> Georgia Center for Opportunity (2021). State Pandemic Response: Understand the Impact on Employment and Work. <https://georgiaopportunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Pandemic-Response-Impact-on-Employment-Work-December-2021.pdf>



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**HB1424 - FAQ**

**Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition**

**What does HB1424 do?**

- Establishes the Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition.

**Why is HB1424 important?**

- HB1424 will create a team of experts from a variety of sectors that serve to find solutions to improve Maryland's economic development in the time of the COVID-19 crisis.

**Who will the Workgroup consist of?**

- **The Maryland Secretary of Commerce** (or the Secretary's designee)
- **The Maryland Secretary of Labor** (or the Secretary's designee)
- **The Maryland Secretary of Transportation** (or the Secretary's designee)
- **The Maryland Secretary of Housing and Community Development** (or the Secretary's designee)
- **Four members of the Maryland Senate**, including members from the Budget and Taxation Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.
- **Four members of the Maryland House of Delegates**, including members from the Appropriations Committee, the Committee on Ways and Means, the Economic Matters Committee, the Health and Government Operations Committee, and the Environment and Transportation Committee.
- **Five members of the business sector**, including representatives from the healthcare industry, cybersecurity industry, restaurant industry, childcare industry, and a multi-industry organization.
- **One member of the State nonprofit sector**
- **Five members of the labor sector** including representatives from sectors identified, as designated by the Maryland state and DC AFL-CIO.

**What topics will the Workgroup make recommendations on?**

- Telehealth
- Telework
- Online education (kindergarten to graduate programs)
- Childcare
- Job creation acceleration
- Unemployment Compensation
- Underemployment
- Small businesses and entrepreneurship
- Tax System Modernization
- Changes in real estate (such as office space, retail, residential, rental and ownership, and community economic centers)
- Supply Chain Management
- small businesses that are not associated with a chain store, commonly referred to as "main street businesses"
- Rebuilding the public health system
- Other impacts on public service