



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 788 – STATE AND LOCAL PARKS –
CHILD SAFE ZONE PROGRAM – ESTABLISHMENT (EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SAFE PARKS ACT)**

Sponsor – Delegate Stein

February 23, 2022

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

Position: Support

House Bill 788 creates the Child Safe Zone Program in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to improve public safety at State and local parks, as well as to create a fund to finance the program. The funds are to be used to improve safety at state and local parks through environmental design components such as enhanced lighting, landscaping, and security cameras. The funds can also be used to pay for increased staffing, including security.

Environmental design improvements can include prominently placed signage, enhanced lighting, and improved access and security. The basic guiding principles to safety in parks include access control (gates, fencing, furniture placement), territorial reinforcement (signs, trees, paving), natural surveillance (on-site surveillance during programming and visibility from roadways), and maintenance (making timely repairs to broken equipment, painting over graffiti, etc.)

The increased level of unprovoked violence in the state is unacceptable and substantive changes are required to improve public safety and to provide a feeling of security among Maryland citizens.

Implementing the Child Safe Zone program will send a signal that the park has been designed to create a safer space for children and families. The GBC supports using environmental design to enhance access to safe public parks as a community and economic development tool. Safer parks make a community more inviting and people and businesses are more likely to be attracted to an area with safe parks.

House Bill 788 will help to create safer community spaces for children, and make parks a less attractive location to those committing criminal activity.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 788.

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 67-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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