

2022 GBCC SB 782 Post Covid Workgroup Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ashlie Bagwell

Position: FAV



Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce

*In Support of
Senate Bill 782—Workgroup on the Post-COVID19 Crisis Economic Transition*

*March 1, 2022
Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 550 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on Senate Bill 782—Workgroup on the Post-COVID 19 Crisis Economic Transition.

The past two years have been hard for all Marylanders, including the business community. Every industry has been impacted in some way. While, finally, a small sense of normalcy is being restored, that does not mean that our businesses don't continue to struggle. We appreciate what Senate Bill 782 seeks to do, which is, with stakeholder input, make recommendations regarding how the State may adjust its economic development and other strategies in the context of changes resulting from crises in individual sectors.

For this reason, we enthusiastically support Senate Bill 782 and urge a favorable vote.

rev SB 782 MSCCA Favorable final.pdf

Uploaded by: Christina Peusch

Position: FAV



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

Maryland State Child Care Association

2810 Carrollton Road
Annapolis, Md. 21403
Phone: (410) 820-9196
Email: info@mscca.org
www.mscca.org

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 4500 members working in the field of early childhood. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

**Testimony: SB 782
Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition
Position: FAVORABLE
Submitted to: Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees
March 1, 2022**

Esteemed Members of the Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees, the Maryland State Child Care Association supports Senate Bill 782 to establish a comprehensive, short-term workgroup to study and make recommendations regarding how the State may adjust or transition economic development strategies in the context of changes resulting from pandemic crisis in certain sectors, including the child care industry. We appreciate the recognition of the child care community by Senator Hester and Senator Rosapepe as a necessary component of economic recovery and for the commitment of the General Assembly to child care issues.

Child care in Maryland is private business providing a public good. It is a necessary economic imperative. Maryland's child care industry is comprised of over 7,000 mostly small businesses, primarily women owned and operated. Child Care is a two-generation workforce issue, essential to support the workforce and important to develop the workforce of tomorrow. Parents rely on consistent childcare to enter or remain in the workforce, however access to affordable, quality childcare is difficult for many, and the pandemic has exacerbated access issues. Maryland has lost 855 child care businesses since March 2020 - the onset of the pandemic. According to MSDE, Maryland went from 8,003 child care businesses in January 2020 to 7,078 in December 2021. A loss of 925 businesses and tens of thousands of slots for children now gone.

The recent Division of Early Childhood budget analysis conveyed concerning data. MSDE reported declining licensed child care slots in Maryland. There was a net reduction of 12,846 licensed child care slots between fiscal 2016 and 2021. However, just from fiscal 2020 to 2021 alone, child care capacity fell by 10,570 licensed slots, accounting for 82.3%. This sharp decline in capacity highlights how the pandemic has accelerated program closures.

The child care industry has not recovered from the pandemic and was tenuous prior to the pandemic. According to the federal Bureau of Labor and Statistics, about 11% fewer people are working in child care services now than in February 2020. In Maryland, MSDE reports that over 97% of licensed child care is open, however of the businesses open, 44% of businesses are under 50% enrolled. Additionally, numerous programs have demand for services, but cannot open space/classrooms due to the critical workforce shortages plaguing small business, especially the child care industry. Providers and advocates say recruiting and retaining workers is now one of their biggest challenges.

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends child care costs equal no more than 7% of a household budget. Unfortunately, with the price increases, child care expenses now make up at least 10% of the median household income for married couples with children under 18, according to Child Care Aware. And for single parents, costs can take up as much as 35% of the household budget. For many, that's simply unsustainable.

According to the National Women's Law Center, women have been particularly hard hit with about a million women missing from the workforce compared with pre-pandemic levels. This inequity is due to primarily continuing school and childcare disruptions.

Senate Bill 782 will provide opportunity for a deeper dive and collection of data to inform recommendations from a variety of sectors working together for common economic goals. The Maryland State Child Care Association is appreciative of the inclusion of child care as a critical component of the Workgroup and supports the study with recommendations for economic development and transition strategies as COVID 19 requires our state to address pandemic related issues to ensure successful recovery.

We urge a favorable report.

Support of SB 782 - Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 1, 2022

To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 782 - Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 782, legislation that establishes the Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition, staffed by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), to make recommendations regarding how the State may adjust its economic development and other strategies in the context of changes resulting from crises in sectors, as specified. The workgroup may retain the services of the University of Maryland, and \$500,000 must be appropriated for that purpose. The workgroup must make recommendations regarding how the State may adjust its economic development and other strategies in the context of changes resulting from crisis in sectors including (1) telehealth; (2) telework; (3) online education, from kindergarten to graduate programs; (4) child care; (5) job creation acceleration; (6) unemployment compensation; (7) underemployment; (8) small businesses and entrepreneurship; (9) tax system modernization; (10) changes in real estate; (11) supply chain management; (12) small businesses that are not associated with a chain store; (13) rebuilding the public health system; and (14) other impacts on public services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been and continues to be very hard on the Ag community. The cost of many of the farm inputs has tripled for the 2022 growing season due to the lack of availability and inflation.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We strongly oppose the increase of unemployment insurance rates to pay for the unemployment due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We support repaying the unemployment insurance trust fund with federal COVID funding.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 782 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396

SB0782 - 3.1.22 -- Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19

Uploaded by: Donald Fry

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 782 – WORKGROUP ON THE POST-COVID-19 CRISIS ECONOMIC TRANSITION Sponsors – Senators Hester and Rosapepe

March 1, 2022

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support with Amendments

Senate Bill 782 establishes a Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition. The workgroup's members would include four senators, four delegates, five members of the business sector, one member of the state nonprofit sector appointed by the Governor and the cabinet secretaries of the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Transportation, and Housing and Community Development. The workgroup would be charged with making recommendations regarding how the State may best address the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and in particular the economic effect of the pandemic. The bill requires an interim report by December 1, 2022 and a final report by December 1, 2023.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is in full support of the intent of Senate Bill 782, and recognizes the need to act to deal with the COVID-19 related economic crisis. 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. The work of the GBC COVID-19 Business Recovery Advisory Council examined many of these issues and can serve to assist State action on this subject.

Proposed Amendments

The GBC recommends a number of amendments that would strengthen the proposed workgroup and its ability to help Maryland government agencies, businesses, and residents recover from this crisis. The amendments focus on two areas: Workgroup membership and the timeline for workgroup action and funding.

Workgroup Membership

The charge of the workgroup covers a broad range of issues, including education, public health, unemployment compensation, business related issues such as unemployment compensation, the tax system, and real estate. The membership of the workgroup, however, does not fully represent these interests. The GBC believes an amendment is needed to alter or increase the membership of the workgroup to include the heads of all agencies related to the charge of the Workgroup.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

With two health related charges, and an education related charge that relates to pre-K through higher education, it would be prudent to include the State Superintendent of Schools, the Secretary of Higher Education, and the Secretary of Health.

Workgroup Charge

The GBC recommends adding an additional topic area to the charge of the workgroup. Despite the inclusion of the Secretary of Transportation on the workgroup, there are no transportation issues listed specifically in the workgroup charge. The GBC recommends including an examination of commuting pattern changes, access to employment, and economic challenges resulting from inadequate transportation options for many Marylanders.

This bill is consistent with the GBC's COVID recovery position, which include a call to advocate for policy, funding, and regulatory solutions to accelerate economic recovery with an emphasis on support for small and minority-owned businesses.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report with the addition of the proposed amendments on Senate Bill 782.

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.

SB782 Sponsor Testimony.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB782 - Workgroup on the COVID-19 Crisis Economic Recovery

March 1, 2022

Chairman, Vice-Chair, and members of the Finance and Budget and Taxation Committee, thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 782, which will establish a workgroup for COVID-19 Crisis Economic Recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a multitude of challengers for our state's workforce and business environment. Though the unemployment rate has decreased since April 2020, the pandemic has changed, and so much our approach to economic recovery. Our state's economy is diverse, with heavy concentrations of professional, scientific, and technical services in some areas, and concentrations of manufacturing, tourism, and skilled trades in others. This means that a one-size-fits-all approach to our post-pandemic recovery simply will not work.

SB782 will establish a short term workgroup to study and draft recommendations to adjust our economic development strategies resulting from significant changes, challenges, and crises in a variety of sectors. These include remote employment, supply chain management, childcare, commercial and residential real estate, our public health system, and our small, Main Street businesses. This workgroup will include four members from the Senate, four members from the House of Delegates, and five private sector representatives from impacted industries. 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.

Colleagues, you may wonder why we should form this workgroup now, given that we are hoping to emerge (fingers crossed) from the pandemic and will have a new executive administration starting in 2023. I would argue that both of these reasons are exactly why we must do this now:

- According to FEMA, when a small business suffers from a natural disaster the initial stabilization takes 2-4 weeks, the short term recovery may take 2-4 months, and the real long term recovery takes 3-5 years until things return to "normal." I have seen this happen with many small businesses in Ellicott City following the floods, and know that many small businesses, hit by economic losses at the start of the pandemic, will be rebuilding slowly over the next 2-3 years and still require support.

- Second, in terms of timing, now is the time to begin the long-term phase of our recovery plan. As our state's economy re-stabilizes, insulated industries may return to business as usual; however, this won't be the case for the rest. Narrow, strategic intervention in 2023 could be the difference between long-term recovery and closing down. Furthermore, with a change in administration, the time is ripe for external review of what we've done well and where we can improve. Then, the new administration can begin with a running start.

The time is right to do this work – if we delay, for many small businesses it will simply be too late. Although our initial responses to the COVID-19 pandemic emerged from trial by fire, our ability to recover and thrive will require significant forethought and careful consideration. For these reasons, **I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 782.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Carroll and Howard Counties

SB782_SponsorAmendment_253726

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV



SB0782/253726/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

02 MAR 22
08:58:12

BY: Senator Hester
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 782
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 1, after line 18, insert:

“(4) five members of the labor sector, including representatives from the health care industry, cybersecurity industry, restaurant industry, childcare industry, and multi-industry labor organization, designated by the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO;”

and in lines 19, 20, and 21, strike “(4)”, “(5)”, and “(6)”, respectively, and substitute “(5)”, “(6)”, and “(7)” respectively.

On page 2, in lines 1 and 2, strike “(7)” and “(8)”, respectively, and substitute “(8)” and “(9)”, respectively.

SB782 Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Leonardo McClarty

Position: FAV

SB 782- Workgroup on the Post–COVID–19 Crisis Economic Transition

FAVORABLE VOTE

Undoubtedly the Covid 19 pandemic has impacted communities across the country including those in Maryland. Besides wreaking havoc on families, it also severely impacted the workplace. Without government intervention, many industries would have gone out of business leaving the families of their employees decimated.

The pandemic also brought to the forefront various irregularities and inequalities around gender, ethnic, and age lines. It also shed light on lesser publicized industries like childcare that without them, many employees could not return to work leaving employers unable to fulfill orders and service customers. These concerns notwithstanding, the pandemic also reminded us of the difficulties minority and women owned businesses have deploying capital. While the remnants of the pandemic are beginning to subside, supply chain issues are further disrupting our economic recovery.

For the reasons outlined above, the Howard County Chamber request a favorable vote on SB782, which if passed would establish a short-term workgroup to study and draft recommendations to adjust our economic development strategies brought about by the Covid pandemic. It is hope that this workgroup comprised of elected officials and business leaders will devise plans, strategies, and policy proposals that will enable us to respond to future economic downturns and public health crisis in a timelier and even more impactful way.

MMF-Written Testimony-For SB 782.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Meher Hossain

Position: FAV

montgomery moving forward

mobilizing leaders to solve our biggest problems together
nonprofits / business / philanthropy / government / education / community

Senate Bill 782 - Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees SUPPORT

February 28, 2022

Esteemed Members of the Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees,

Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), a collective impact initiative of Nonprofit Montgomery, is committed to advancing equitable, accessible systems change in the early care and education (ECE) sector in Montgomery County. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, MMF convened over 50 labor, business, education, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. This representative cross-sector Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition advocates for a diverse, resilient early care and education workforce that is necessary for our state's economic recovery.

Montgomery Moving Forward and the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition support SB 782, Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition. We are grateful for Senator Hester's and Rosapepe's recognition of child care providers as critical members of the business sector whose input into the state's economic recovery is essential. Senate Bill 782 establishes a Workgroup on the Post-Covid 19 Economic Transition and requires that a member of this workgroup represent the childcare sector. The Workgroup is tasked with providing recommendations on how the state may adjust its economic development and other strategies in the context of changes resulting from the impact of the pandemic on sectors including child care.

Childcare is a two-generation workforce issue that supports the workforce of today and develops the workforce of tomorrow. A strong child care sector results in a strong workforce; one that can drive innovation and growth forward for Maryland. The pandemic decimated the child care workforce, hitting female Black and Latina business owners the hardest. "Black child care providers earn an average of 78 cents less per hour than their White counterparts," and while the Paycheck Protection Program could have helped ease some of the burden they faced during the pandemic, "white [child care] business owners were approved for Paycheck Protection Program funds at almost twice the rate of Latino business owners."¹ The recovery of the child care sector is critical to the recovery of the overall economy. However, "pandemic-fueled staffing challenges threaten to hold back the recovery, as the staffing problems at day cares have a ripple effect across the economy."²

1

<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/press-release/black-latina-child-care-providers-face-heaviest-burden-struggling-industry-new-report>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/09/19/childcare-workers-quit/>

SB 782 prioritizes child care as a key business sector to inform Maryland's recovery. Montgomery Moving Forward and the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition support Senate Bill 782 and the recognition of child care as a critical economic driver for our state's recovery; one that is largely led by women of color. The inclusion of a child care representative in the Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition will not only inform the state's economic future but also its commitment to equity and inclusion. **We urge you to give SB 782 a favorable report.**

Respectfully and sincerely,

Montgomery Moving Forward Co-Chairs, Kevin Beverly; Susan Madden; and Kathy Stevens, and the following Members of the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition: Larry Bram, Senior Vice President, Innovation & Program Development. Easter Seals Serving DC|MD|VA; Jody Burghardt, Division Director, Children and Family Services, Sheppard Pratt; Ruby Daniels, President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association; Christina Lopez, President, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC)

sb0782 - Workgroup on the Post-Covid Economic Tran

Uploaded by: Tom Ballentine

Position: FAV



March 2, 2022

The Honorable Delores Kelly, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Miller State Office Building, 3 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support: SB 782 – Workgroup on the Post-Covid Economic Transition

Dear Chair Kelly and Committee Members:

The NAIOP Maryland Chapters representing 700 companies involved in all aspects of commercial, industrial and mixed use real estate recommends your favorable report on SB 782 which creates a workgroup to evaluate and prepare for post COVID-19 economic conditions.

- + COVID-19 has permanently changed the way companies utilize office space, how consumers shop, dine out, commute, and the activities that our homes must support.
- + These changes represent a generational restructuring of the office, retail, multi-family, and hospitality sectors of commercial real estate. The ramifications for related companies and households, tenants and patrons have yet to fully unfold.
- + Assessing the extent of these changes and how to quickly adjust to a post-covid economy is the charge of the workgroup created by SB 782.

NAIOP respectfully recommends your favorable report on Senate Bill 782.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T.M. Ballentine".

Tom Ballentine, Vice President for Policy
NAIOP – Maryland Chapters, *The Association for Commercial Real Estate*

cc: Senate Finance Committee Members
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Members
Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.

SB 782 - Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Eco

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FWA



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

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President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

**SB 782 – Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition
Senate Finance Committee
March 1, 2022**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 782 – Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition, with amendments. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Our economy is changing in Maryland, the United States, and globally. COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated existing problems within our economy, and revealed opportunities to improve the lives of workers and their families, should we make the correct policy choices in these unprecedented times. SB 782 is a necessary step in determining those choices and how best we can take advantage of the changing economy, as well as how we can positively direct that change to benefit our state.

SB 782 is incredibly inclusive of the business community by including five members, but without the labor community involved, any policy recommendations will be heavily tilted in the direction of business owners, potentially leaving the needs of workers completely unaddressed. Plenty of representation on this workgroup exists to protect the profits of business, but there are no voices who will stand up for wages and benefits, and for the vast majority of workers in Maryland who will be impacted the most by SB 782 and the policies that flow from the workgroup.

We do not seek worker representation on this workgroup for simple parity with business representation. The effect that this pandemic had on Maryland's workforce cannot be understated, and we must mitigate future harm with present action. According to a 2019 report by New America, every food, grocery, and retail worker predicted a significant increase in technology in the future and a decline in the number of people working in their stores¹. Many workers are pessimistic about the future for humans in their workplace, fearing their employers view them as a cost they will cut through automation. That fear has only been exacerbated by this pandemic and stretches across more sectors of our economy.

¹ <https://www.newamerica.org/work-workers-technology/reports/worker-voices/executive-summary/>

With one amendment adding labor expertise, we can make SB 782 representative of the entirety of Maryland's economy, by including workers along with businesses. Labor supports the bill with the following amendment:

On page 1, after line 18:

4. FIVE MEMBERS OF THE LABOR SECTOR, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM SECTORS IDENTIFIED, AS DESIGNATED BY THE MARYLAND STATE AND DC AFL-CIO.

We ask for a favorable report with the above amendment on SB 782.

SB 782--AOBA--FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Ryan Washington

Position: FWA



Bill No: SB 782-- Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition

Committee: Finance

Date: 3/1/2022

Position: Favorable with Amendment

The Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) represents members that own or manage more than 23 million square feet of commercial office space and 133,000 apartment rental units in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Senate Bill 782 would establish a workgroup on the post-COVID-19 economic transition and economic crisis. The workgroup is tasked with making recommendations regarding how the State adjusts its economic developments and other strategies in changes resulting from crises in various sectors.

AOBA supports the creation of the workgroup. However, multifamily and commercial representatives are not mentioned as taskforce members. AOBA recommends adding members from the multifamily and commercial industry to participate in the workgroup as the industry has faced significant changes and the bill seeks to understand changes in real estate such as office space, retail, residential, rental and ownership, and community economic centers.

For these reasons, AOBA requests a favorable with amendments report on SB 782.

For further information, contact Ryan Washington, AOBA Government Affairs Manager, at 202-770-7713 or rwashington@aoba-metro.org.

SB 782 COVID Workgroup FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Fidler

Position: FWA

Support with Amendments**Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees**
Senate Bill 782 (Hester) Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition

Sara C. Fidler, President

sfidler@micua.org

March 1, 2022

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the 58,000 students who we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support with amendments regarding [Senate Bill 782 \(Hester\) Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition](#). This bill establishes a workgroup comprised of members of the Legislature, business sector, nonprofit sector, and various members of the Governor's cabinet such as the Secretary of Commerce, Labor, Transportation, and Housing and Community Development. The Workgroup is charged with making recommendations regarding how the State may adjust economic development and other strategies including telehealth, telework, **online education**, childcare, employment and underemployment, etc. An interim report is due by December 1, 2022, and a final report is due by December 1, 2023.

During the COVID-19 public health crisis, the MICUA schools have been leaders in successfully balancing the best interests of our students, faculty, and staff with the risks of the pandemic. During the spring of 2020, we pivoted to remote/online instruction to ensure that everyone would remain safe during a time of extreme uncertainty. During the fall of 2020, five of the MICUA schools returned to a residential, de-densified, socially-distanced semester while the other eight MICUA schools provided remote instruction. By the spring of 2021, eleven of the MICUA schools had returned to an in person residential college experience, with a hybrid content delivery at the other two schools (for labs and/or senior seminar and thesis requirements). As of the fall of 2021, every MICUA institution has returned to an in person residential college experience.

We applaud the sponsors for their foresight in bringing this important issue to the General Assembly for consideration. **Given the charges of the Workgroup, we believe that including representatives from higher education would add great value.** Not only would higher education be able to assist with conversations about online education, but also telehealth – as we have facilitated services for our students despite the physical challenges of the pandemic; telework – as some of our employees are embracing this model; childcare – as we have found ways to ensure that our faculty and staff are able to return to work when having young children at home; and employment and underemployment – as in several counties, the MICUA institutions are the largest or one of the largest employers.

We would be pleased to provide any additional information that the Committee would find useful as this bill moves through the Legislative Process. **For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a Favorable with Amendments report for Senate Bill 782 to include representatives of higher education in the Workgroup.**