

 **POSITION STATEMENT****TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE HEALTH AND  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE****HOUSE BILL 1208 – HEALTH OCCUPATIONS - HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE EXPANSION  
Sponsor: Delegate Kelly****March 3, 2022****DONALD C. FRY  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE****Position: Support**

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports House Bill 1208, which would require the Board of Nursing to create a marketing plan to promote careers in nursing. Additionally, the bill would create a tax credit for licensed practical nurse and registered nurse preceptors and create a Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse Preceptorship Tax Credit fund to offset the costs of the tax credits. The total amount of tax credit certificates that may be issued would be the lesser of either the total amount in the fund or \$100,000. The legislation would also codify the nurse extern program.

In the more than 700 days since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland has experienced a staggering workforce crisis. There has been a 50% increase in hospital nurse vacancies in the last five months of 2021 alone. This is a critical component of the health care industry as registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants make up 39% of the hospital workforce. According to a 2020 analysis, Maryland's registered nurse (RN) population by capita is in the bottom third of the nation.

In 2020, the GBC Board of Directors highlighted that a skilled workforce is the key ingredient to a thriving economy and directed the organization to examine the workforce needs of the Greater Baltimore region over the next decade and make recommendations to ensure that the education and workforce development systems were prepared to meet those needs. The GBC's Preparing for the Future: A Regional Workforce Development Initiative was created to ensure that the region's high-growth industries have a pipeline of highly skilled workers who can contribute to future economic growth. A report was released in late 2020 outlining recommendations to meet the workforce needs. Since the report's issuance, the GBC has continued to regularly convene a diverse network of stakeholders to assist in the implementation of the recommendations.

Many of the recommendations focused on the need to increase apprenticeships and other on-the-job training avenues. Under Governor Hogan's Executive Orders during the public health emergency, some nursing students were able to work in supportive roles. The students are supervised at work, so they learn as they earn. This has been a great benefit for both the health care system and nursing students, and this bill would allow that program to continue.

This bill is consistent with one of the key tenets in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth. The pillar provides:

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

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**Government leadership that unites with business as a partner.** Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

**For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 1208.**

*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.*