



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 541 – CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE - ALTERATIONS

Sponsors – Delegate Qi, et al

February 17, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO**

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

House Bill 541 would expand the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee by adding two new members: a representative of career colleges and a representative of skilled trade organizations. In addition, the CTE committee would be required to develop a list of all skilled trade organization programs and career school programs in the state and provide the list to guidance counselors and public schools for distribution to students.

There is currently a skilled labor shortage in the United States. 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, and a report was released in late 2020 outlining recommendations to meet the needs. Since the report's issuance, the GBC has continued to regularly convene a diverse network of stakeholders to assist in implementation of the recommendations.

A number of the recommendations in the Preparing for the Future report involve increasing awareness of high-skilled, family-supporting wage jobs among high school students. Providing information on training options to students enables them to make an informed decision about the time and money they want to spend on training and education. Many students do not desire to attend college, but may not be aware of the myriad training opportunities that exist in Maryland.

In addition to its alignment with the GBC Preparing for the Future Report, House Bill 541 is consistent with one of the core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth in the GBC report *Gaining A Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*.

Workforce that is highly-educated and meets Maryland's business needs. Maryland's secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland's business sectors.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 541.

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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