



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE**

SENATE BILL 121 – MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER-FOCUSED STUDENTS ACT OF 2023

Sponsor – Senator Rosapepe

January 24, 2023

**MARK A. THOMAS
PRESIDENT & CEO**

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

Senate Bill 121 requires Maryland’s school districts to consider the pursuit of career certificates and apprenticeships as equivalent to pursuing postsecondary education. The bill provides students and families the option to authorize the release of a student’s personal information found on a college and career readiness platform with apprenticeship sponsors and employers registered with the Department of Labor or a local workforce development board.

Additionally, the bill requires that any school district that pays for academic testing such as Advanced Placement examinations, Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, or a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) exams shall also pay for apprenticeship entrance exams and industry certification exams.

The Greater Baltimore Committee contends industry recognized credentials and apprenticeship opportunities provide a path for Maryland’s student to achieve family-sustaining jobs. Ensuring that students are encouraged to pursue these options in addition to post-secondary education benefits both students as well as the countless businesses in Maryland that need a pipeline of qualified workers. In addition, paying the cost of needed exams for apprenticeships or industry certifications will allow more students to pursue opportunities to gain skills and credentials for jobs in high-growth industry sectors.

This approach is consistent with one of the core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth outlined 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 Senate Bill 121.

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 68-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

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

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org