



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 1152 - Entrepreneurial Equity Act

House Ways & Means Committee

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 6,400 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 1152 requires the Secretary of Labor and each professional licensing board to waive any license and registration fees imposed on a person establishing a new business, including a home-based business located in the State.

The Maryland Department of Labor would be required to direct at least 10% of the funding budgeted for the state's economic development and financial assistance programs, along with at least 10% of workforce development funding to assist those starting a new business and to organizations or programs that provide services to businesses that have been in operation for less than five years.

The legislation also requires the Office of State Procurement to direct at least 10% of all open procurements designated to the Small Business Reserve to businesses that have been in operation for less than five years.

Shifting a small portion of resources to emerging entrepreneurs and young businesses will contribute to growing Maryland's workforce and economic development. New businesses started by entrepreneurs create almost all net new jobs in the U.S. economy. However, our system in Maryland makes it hard for them to start and grow.

HB 1152 features comprehensive policies that make it easier to start and grow new businesses by alleviating financial barriers. By supporting the creation of small businesses, we'll enable them to create jobs and spur economic growth. With many small businesses struggling with persistently high inflation and labor shortages, it is imperative that we find every opportunity to help Maryland's entrepreneurs and newly established businesses.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **Favorable Report** on **HB 1152**.