

TESTIMONY OF
J. Thomas Sadowski, Executive Director
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FAVORABLE
HB0471

BEFORE
House Ways & Means Committee

Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Jhneanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair



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1:00 PM

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Good morning, **Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the House Ways & Means Committee.** My name is Tom Sadowski, Executive Director for MEDCO. It is an honor to be before you to testify on behalf of HB 471.

Maryland needs a Place Making Program... that was the original intent of the RISE Zone, but as we have come to know well, it just hasn't done the job. We made some strategic tweaks a few years ago... that were helpful but the proposed amendments to the programs are vital if we are to meet the challenges present today.

According to NSF, Kaufman Institute and others... Maryland is #1 in Academic R&D per capita, but only ranks 28th in business R&D as a percent of industry output, otherwise known as commercialization. We are 40th in early startup survival rate. Our economic competitiveness requires we do better in these key areas... and the way we do this is to create "Places" where industry government and academia can collaborate... investing as partners to commercialize our R&D and create valuable job opportunities. When you consider many of these "Places" exist near federal facilities or higher ed institutions within or near underserved communities ... the importance of this program becomes magnified.

Further, with the enhancement of our Tax increment financing capabilities, MEDCO can help serve as a catalyst, working alongside public/private partners to make the investment required to offer the physical space needed to drive commercialization and entrepreneurial activity. Types of facilities would include:

- Biotech/biomedical wet laboratories with shared equipment
- Prototype manufacturing centers
- Secure compartmentalized information facilities (SCIF)
- Cyber ranges, and
- other specialized workforce training or skill certification lab related space

By way of HB 471, the RISE zone can become the way Maryland fosters strategic “place making” and raises the level of collaborations amongst public-private partners. More importantly, the RISE program can assure these collaborations are housed close to Maryland’s innovation assets, and in or near those communities that need investment, business creation and valuable jobs the most.

Thank you again for your attention and we ask for your favorable report on HB 471.