

Sample Letter of Support SB765_copy.pdf

Uploaded by: Adrian Jones

Position: FAV

SB 765 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Antonio Hayes

Position: FAV

ANTONIO HAYES
Legislative District 40
Baltimore City

Finance Committee



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 222
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3656 • 301-858-3656
800-492-7122 Ext. 3656
Antonio.Hayes@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 765: Economic Development- Business Diversity
Incubator Program and Fund**

Chairman Beidle and esteemed members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 765, which establishes the Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund in the Department of Commerce to provide grants to certain business entities to establish diversity and effective business incubators in the State, authorizing the Governor in each of fiscal years 2026 through 2031, to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$5,000,000 to the Business Diversity Incubator Fund, etc.

Federally, we created the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice in 1957 to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all persons in the United States, particularly some of the most vulnerable members of our society. 20 years later in 1978, the Maryland General Assembly enacted legislation creating the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program to ensure that socially and economically disadvantaged small business owners are included in the state's procurement and contracting opportunities. However, very little strides were made in the tech space.

This bill seeks to create equity in tech by addressing the wide chasm that exists in terms of investment into companies run by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter, and I urge you to support the passage of Senate Bill 765.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Antonio Hayes".

Senator Antonio L. Hayes
40th Legislative District – MD

INCUBATOR - Copy.pdf

Uploaded by: antwan askia

Position: FAV

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing this letter to strongly urge you to vote YES on Maryland Senate Bill: 0765 — Economic Development –Business Diversity Incubator. As you likely are aware, this bill will allow the allocation of resources in the form of grants for the development of incubators. SB0765 authorizes the governor to include in the annual budget for fiscal years 2026-2031 an appropriation of \$5,000,000 to the Business Diversity Incubator Fund. These funds will be donated and used solely for the development of diverse and effective business incubators. The approval of the bill would be a substantial step towards advancing economically impoverished communities: a pivotal objective of Governor Wes Moore.

Foremost, an incubator assists entrepreneurs in establishing their business while providing guidance, business connections along with management training and, when sustainable, an office space to facilitate business. This bill would award an incubator organization between \$100,000 - \$400,000 for its development and long-term sustainability. The grant money will be awarded to qualified incubators who are selected after a competitive application process. Those incubators that are managed by socially or economically disadvantaged individuals, have experience supporting companies in the start-up stage, and have an established presence in underserved communities will have priority acceptance for the grant application. Therefore, the grant money should reasonably be used for its intended purpose.

The development of incubators is of such vital importance because of the growing number of entrepreneurs in the United States today. As mentioned, those incubators which are already established and assisting economically struggling communities will receive priority consideration for the grant. In these communities that are socially and economically disadvantaged, the number of entrepreneurs is continuously increasing. Many men and women in these communities may not have the qualifications, skills, or desire to maintain a standard job, but they have profound ideas and business models. With the assistance of an incubator these entrepreneurs and their businesses models can begin to burgeon into prosperous companies, effecting the development of impoverished communities and its members.

In closing, incubator development is very important for our communities, and the passage of this bill may very well save thousands of start-up companies in jeopardy of failing due to lack of support. An incubator would also encourage entrepreneurship and the development of start-up companies. Many communities will benefit from an alternative to the standard working lifestyle; with the help of an incubator, they will be able to reap the benefits that comes from being a successful business owner. In closing, I ask that you take this letter into consideration and vote YES on Senate Bill 0765.

Thank You

Sample Letter of Support SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: Bianca Jackson

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Print Name/Date/District#

Signature

Sample Letter of Support SB765 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Cathy Allen

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Print Name/Date/District#

Signature

Senate Finance Committee - Testimony Letter (Colby

Uploaded by: Colby Smith

Position: FAV

Synopsis and Key Points:

Bill: SB0765 Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill

POSITION: IN FAVOR

This bill would:

- Fund and create business diversity incubators to increase participation and success of Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals and Under-served Communities starting and expanding businesses in the technology sector and the entrepreneurs addressing those communities throughout the State of Maryland.

Reasons to support this bill:

- This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities.
- This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.
- The immense need for economic development in under-served communities are addressed in this bill.
- Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program provides grants to specific social enterprises, for profits, nonprofits, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators in the State of Maryland.
- These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses and investments in communities in the State of Maryland.

Letter of Support below:

February 27, 2024

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

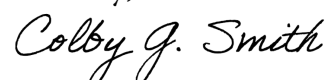
As a long-standing community partner, the focus of the Greater Baltimore Black Chamber of Commerce is on the facilitation and creation of business opportunities and resources for black-owned businesses, fostering business growth that results in increased employment of city residents, reinvestment in, and sustainability of predominantly African American communities - this bill paves the way for the type of progress we stand for.

I am a member of the Chamber, and founder of Digital Bay Center, Inc., a technology business incubator. We support startups and existing companies that bring cutting edge new products and services to market, and engage youth in workforce development and educational programming. I have also worked in the legal field for most of my adult life. As a child, I would watch as my father, the Honorable Paul A. Smith, Sr., handled thousands of cases in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. I support this bill not only because to fund company creation and innovation throughout the State in under-served communities, but because more jobs mean less crime.

As important as the Greater Baltimore region is to us, we recognize that a project like this represents more than just the Baltimore area. It represents job opportunities, business opportunities, and community growth and development opportunities for countless citizens throughout the State of Maryland. It represents a future with more thriving businesses, communities, and a business/technology ecosystem that is inclusive of all Marylanders. We want to be a part of this future.

I ask that you submit a favorable report. In the name of equity, in the name of progress, I recommend that the Maryland General Assembly pass SB0765 into law.

Sincerely,



Colby G. Smith
Founder, Digital Bay Center, Inc. - Member,
Greater Baltimore Black Chamber of Commerce
3 S. Frederick St., Suite 801
Baltimore, Md. 21202

Ahead of the Game Testimony 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: David Smith

Position: FAV

Ahead of the Game Testimony 2024



Good Afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today, my name is David Smith. I represent one half of a Digital Barber School/Multimedia Incubator, Ahead of the Game. As a master barber that's served over three decades within the beauty/barbering industry partnered with my brother a media professional with two decades experience in Baltimore's local broadcast market we would respectfully request your support for Senate Bill 765. Why may you ask? Well, my brother and I have created a digital barbering school/multimedia incubator that will produce more businesses in the form of mobile barbershops synced with marketing production teams that will assist in the growth & proliferation of these businesses within underserved communities. This process functions as follows:

- BARBER STUDENTS & MEDIA INTERNS COLLAB TO PRODUCE MARKETING CONTENT
- MEDIA INTERN WILL REGULARLY PRODUCE SEGMENTS THAT WILL BE INCLUDED IN AN ONGOING WEBSERIES THAT HIGHLIGHTS BARBERING & VARIOUS LIFESTYLES
- MEDIA INTERNS WILL CREATE CONTENT FOR VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS THAT HIGHLIGHTS BARBERING & VARIOUS LIFESTYLES
- MEDIA INTERNS WILL USE ONGOING WEBSERIES TO ESTABLISH & GROW CUSTOMERS FOR BARBERING STUDENTS
- BARBER STUDENT TUTORIALS & SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATION WILL PROVIDE MEDIA INTERNS WITH ONGOING PROJECTS THAT WILL BETTER THEIR PRODUCTION SKILLS
- AOTG INCUBATOR WILL CREATE MORE LICENSED BARBERS WITH THE INTENT TO OPEN & OPERATE THEIR OWN BARBERSHOP FRANCHISE EQUIPPED WITH ITS OWN MARKETING/PRODUCTION TEAM
- AOTG INCUBATOR WILL CREATE SKILLED MEDIA PROFESSIONALS EVENTUALLY FORMING PRODUCTION TEAMS THAT WILL PRODUCE MARKETING & MEDIA CONTENT FOR THE CONSUMPTION OF A WIDE VIEWING AUDIENCE (DOCUMENTARIES, TRAINING VIDEOS, WEBSERIES, SHORT FILMS, COMMERCIALS, MUSIC VIDEOS, FEATURE FILMS, ETC...)

Furthermore, this legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

Therefore, we, my brother & I, as well as others in attendance here today are in support of the Diversity Incubators bill SB765. This historic legislation and the immense need for economic development in underserved communities are addressed in this bill. Establishing the Business Diversity Program is to provide grants to specific social enterprises, nonprofits, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators in the State of Maryland. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses and investments in the communities in the State of Maryland it is for these reasons we ask that you Vote Yes for Senate Bill 765!

Sample Letter of Support HB1490 (003).pdf

Uploaded by: Dina Castellanos

Position: FAV

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Vice-Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON HB1490 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of HB1490, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of HB1490. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Dina Castellanos 2/26/24

Print Name/Date/District#

Dina Castellanos

Signature

Sample Letter of Support SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: Dina Castellanos

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Dina Castellanos 2/26/24

Print Name/Date/District#

Dina Castellanos

Signature

Letter of Support SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: Dr. Johnnie Simpson

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

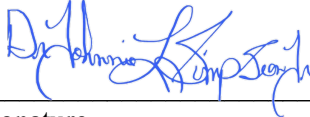
On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Dr. Johnnie Simpson

Print Name/Date/District#



Signature

SB 0765 - MBA - FAV - GR 24.pdf

Uploaded by: Evan Richards

Position: FAV



SB 765 - Economic Development - Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund - Established

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Date: February 27, 2024

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Bankers Association (MBA) **SUPPORTS** SB 765. This legislation establishes the Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund within the Maryland Department of Commerce. The Program will distribute grants from the Fund to qualified business incubators across Maryland to increase diverse incubator programs.

Maryland banks take great pride in the work that they do to support entrepreneurs and small businesses across the State. When lenders look to support these entrepreneurs and businesses, they look for business plans and growth strategies that business incubators are well equipped to assist in implementing. Business incubators put entrepreneurs and small businesses in the best position to grow and attain traditional financing opportunities from lenders. The creation of the Business Diversity Incubator Program will ensure that additional financial support is provided to business incubators who are committed to serving diverse businesses and communities.

Accordingly, the MBA urges issuance of a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 765.

The Maryland Bankers Association (MBA) represents FDIC-insured community, regional, and national banks, employing more than 26,000 Marylanders and holding more than \$209 billion in deposits in over 1,200 branches across our State. The Maryland banking industry serves customers across the State and provides an array of financial services including residential mortgage lending, business banking, estates and trust services, consumer banking, and more.

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0765.pdf

Uploaded by: John Olszewski

Position: FAV

JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive



JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE
Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **SB 765**

TITLE: Economic Development – Business Diversity Incubator
Program and Fund – Established

SPONSOR: Senator Hayes

COMMITTEE: Finance

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 27, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 765 – Economic Development – Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund – Established. This legislation will establish the Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund within the Maryland Department of Commerce to broaden opportunity in every community across the State of Maryland.

Specifically, the program and fund created by SB 765 provides training, funding, and general support to businesses being led by socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs. The purposes of this fund are consistent with Baltimore County’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals demonstrated by initiatives such as the Minority and Women’s Business Enterprise Programs. It is imperative for the Baltimore region’s economic health that entrepreneurs from historically underinvested communities are given equitable opportunities to establish and operate a business. For too long, women, people of color, and low to moderate income holders have been denied, directly or systemically, access to opportunities to start a business and accumulate wealth. The Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund is a common sense step towards undoing those historic inequities.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 765 from the Senate Finance Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

JS SB0765.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Sutton

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Joseph Sutton

2/26/24 - District# 3

GBBCC Letterhead SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: Kendrick Tilghman

Position: FAV



**GREATER BALTIMORE BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
(GBBCC)**

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401
The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:
On behalf of myself my family members, & the Greater Baltimore Black Chamber of Commerce, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols. We are in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Kendrick Tilghman 2/26/2024 / District 10

Signature

1401 Severn Street

Baltimore, MD 21230

443-424-2201

SB 765_Commerce_Business Diversity Incubator_Suppo

Uploaded by: Kevin Anderson

Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 27, 2024
BILL NO: Senate Bill 765
BILL TITLE: Economic Development - Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund
- Established
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 765 - Economic Development - Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund - Established.

Bill Summary:

This bill creates a business diversity incubator program and fund that awards grants to business incubators that adopt practices to achieve goals of targeting socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs and startups. Commerce is the administrator of the program and will award these grant funds to qualified incubators through a competitive application process. This bill recommends a \$5 million annual appropriation for fiscal years 2026-2031.

Background:

A study on Maryland's Innovation Competitiveness directed by the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) released in early 2023 reported that while Maryland ranks highly for its share of Black-owned and women-owned firms, there is still a significant gap between those populations' business ownership representation and populations representation. The study also found "it will take 43 years for women and 47 years for Black Marylanders to achieve parity in business ownership based on 2012–2019 (pre-COVID) average annual growth in business ownership by race, ethnicity, and gender¹." One recommendation from the study was to expand entrepreneurial leadership training and mentorship for people of color and women in order to reduce this gap more quickly.

Rationale:

Passage of this bill will allow qualified incubators to receive award grants to encourage focus on socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs. Incubators are crucial components of an ecosystem that will grow and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the State. Commerce is committed to equity and inclusivity in our efforts to increase our State's economic competitiveness, and the Business Diversity Incubator Program will help Commerce to develop better working relationships with Maryland's network of incubators while also supporting our State's entrepreneurs and those considering becoming entrepreneurs.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 765.

¹ https://www.tedcomd.com/sites/default/files/2023-01/RTI-KeenPoint_TEDCO_report_01_19_2023%20FINAL.pdf

KP_SB0765_HB1490 Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Khrystyn Pearce

Position: FAV



Khrystyn Pearce

Founder, Operating
Manager

Khrystyn Pearce
1433 Charlestown Dr.
Edgewood, MD
443.876.9466
chefkhrystyn@gmail.com

23 February 2024

Khrystyn Pearce

Founder & Operating Manager, Our Daily Delights Food Services, LLC
5000 Thayer Center Suite C
Oakland, MD 21550

Dear Esteemed Chair, Vice-Chair, Members of The Committee for The Senate Finance Committee,

It is my honor to affirm that I am in support of Senate Bill 0765 and House Bill 1490 with a written and verbal YES to both bills! With that said it is my testimony that I have personally experienced the statistic that Black founders in the U.S. receive a mere 0.48% or \$661 million out of \$136 billion of all venture capital, this funding alone was allocated in 2023. As you are aware and may imagine, this is very disparaging to my community. These numbers are totally unacceptable and I am excited to say that due to the advocacy of the people in our community, Colby Smith with the Digital Bay Center Incubator program, Senator Antonio Hayes and Delegate Melissa Wells strides have been made! Today we want to make history and do it on a greater scale!

My name is Khrystyn Pearce. I am a small minority business owner in the state of Maryland. I have not only the skillset, innovation and ingenuity necessary for successful business and growth, I also have the experience. However, like most people in my community I lack the financial resources for capital. So, much like any other business I began to research what resources would be available, to which I came across the concept of incubator programs. After diligent research I found a myriad of fellowships with successful cohorts. I began to apply to what seemed like it would be a good fit. To my chagrin; it was not as easy as I thought it would be. Not because of the application process, the locations, the time commitment or any of the other variables one must take into consideration. No, it was a failed attempt because of social and economic disadvantages associated with my community. For example, conglomerate brands want you to concede to their agenda rather than trying to market to all diverse communities. Finding an incubator that, although is outside of your region, caters to your very niche market with CBP (consumer based product) it has absolutely no clue how to appeal to your target market of disadvantaged or underserved communities so they base your



rejection of the program on that alone, creating stagnancy and economic disparities. Or, they are all together so far removed and out of touch that they don't even realize there is a need within certain demographics and because of that alone, we experience lack. For these reasons and more SB0765 and HB1490 must be voted YES! Based on statistics alone, I am not the only minority business owner experiencing such disparities.

To further express my point, I turn to history as not only a source of implementation, showing that there are always a people group who are long suffering but, also as a means to showcase how with the proper advocacy and delegation of resources, there is ample support ensuring success. During biblical times, there was a King named Darius of Persia. He was sought out by some politicians to stop Israel from building a temple for worship. At one point, he stopped their construction. But, Israel never lost hope. Israel then decided to petition King Darius through the very same politicians who sought out King Darius initially to come against them. They asked King Darius to revisit the law books and even more specifically to a certain region. Even going so far as to ask that he review the books from his predecessors, to which he obliged. To King Darius' surprise, Israel was correct in their assessment. Not only were they supposed to have the rights to build the temple they were supposed to be given financial resources to continue the construction. King Darius was just and honored the request! He not only allowed them to continue construction but, he gave every resource necessary. The result was that Israel was able to rebuild the temple and celebrate. Our request for you to say YES to Senate Bill 0765 and House Bill 1490 is a modern day ask to rebuild something we deem as essential for our community; who is long suffering and underserved. We ask that much like the politicians of that time that you would be just in your decision and grant us access to the resources to provide The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill.

With Most Sincerity,

Khrystyn Pearce

Khrystyn Pearce

(Inncuvate) - SB765 Letter (SUPPORT)(2024).pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Lawrence

Position: FAV

February 27th, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

As President of Inncuvate Community Development Partners, a non-profit organization, located in Prince George's County and the community of entrepreneurs I support, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

Inncuvate is focused on the future of work and entrepreneurial ecosystems as we believe in the power of technology-based enterprises as anchors in economic empowerment and community growth engines. Our organization is a full stack entrepreneurship-led economic empowerment enterprise that specializes in creating purpose-built programs and places that attract the best talent and create an environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and the commercialization of new ideas. We have developed incubators at Prince George's Community College. Currently, we are deploying our statewide incubator platform, Inncuvate Venture Studios, with our first location in Prince George's County and seeking another location in Western Maryland.

I'm in support of SB0765. The enactment of SB0765 will offer non-profit organizations, like Inncuvate, the financial capabilities and tenable opportunities for the next generation of pioneers and dreamers. More importantly, this legislation will accelerate pathways to grow the number of minority entrepreneurs throughout the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Mark Lawrence
President

Inncuvate Community Development Partners, Inc.

SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: Maurice Alexander

Position: FAV

February 26, 2024

SB765

The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle

Chair, Finance Committee

3E Miller Senate Office Building

11 Bladen Street

Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Senator Katherine Klausmeier

Vice-Chair, Finance Committee

123 James Senate Office Building

11 Bladen Street

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB765 — Economic Development - Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee:

Good afternoon my name is Maurice Alexander, founder of Osun talent agency and for nearly a decade I have been a resident of district 40. Also, I was born and raised in South East, Washington DC which is literally down the street from Prince George's County. I say that to say that I always considered Maryland my home.

I am in support of this bill not only because it would fund company creation and innovation throughout the State in under-served communities, but it would also create more jobs which means less crime. It would alleviate the school - to - prison pipeline that socio-economically disadvantaged communities are facing at this present day.

Through the funding of this bill, I plan on creating a construction incubator, where myself and my business partners who have decades of expertise in multiple fields of construction will train individuals in construction and how to run a business. Not only would this incubator give employment and business opportunities to individuals in socio-economically disadvantaged communities but also restore and rebuild those communities. Such as restoring abandoned buildings & homes, creating community centers, parks, and also grocery stores in areas that are considered food deserts.

This bill represents job opportunities, business opportunities, and community growth and development opportunities for countless citizens throughout the State of Maryland. It represents a future with more thriving businesses, communities, and a business/technology ecosystem that is inclusive of all Marylanders. I want to be a part of that future.

This bill is a bold move with potential for growth and opportunity for so many, and I ask that you submit a favorable report. I recommend that the Maryland Legislature pass this piece of legislation, because it is beneficial to every citizen of Maryland to have not only sustainable, but thriving business ecosystems. In the name of equity, in the name of progress, I submit to you that this is a ground-breaking piece of legislation and I am in favor of it passing.

Sincerely,

Maurice Alexander

Maurice Alexander

Founder, CEO of Osun talent agency

20 Market PI

Baltimore, MD 21202

The EnTel Companies - Support for SB0765.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Hunter

Position: FAV



February 26, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0765 - Economic Development Business Diversity Incubator
Program

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to request your support of SB0765, *Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund*. This pivotal legislation is crucial for fostering economic prosperity and wealth creation within Maryland, particularly within our diverse communities. It stands as a landmark initiative poised to enhance accessibility, equity, competitiveness, and adherence to contemporary enterprise standards and practices in our state.

At its core, this legislation directly addresses the pressing need for economic transformation in underserved areas. By instituting the Business Diversity Incubator Program, grants will be accessible to a spectrum of qualified enterprises, including social, for-profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations, to establish incubators fostering diverse businesses. These incubators will serve as catalysts for the birth of new ventures, leveraging grant funding and other resources to support startups across communities in Maryland.

I respectfully ask for your favorable vote of SB0765, an important initiative for the future growth of diverse businesses. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 202-670-5192.

Best regards,

Michael Hunter

Michael Hunter
Chief Executive Officer

Letter of Support SB0765.pdf

Uploaded by: Mkawasi Mcharo Hall

Position: FAV

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 26, 2024

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of myself, my family members and community of Baltimore, District 45, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of SB0765. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Mkawasi Mcharo Hall | District 45



Letter of Support HB1490.pdf

Uploaded by: Pauline Tiako

Position: FAV

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Vice-Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON HB1490 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of HB1490, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

I'm in support of HB1490. This historic legislation addresses the immense need for economic development in under-served communities. Establishing the Business Diversity Incubator Program will provide grants to specific social enterprises, for profit, nonprofit, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. These Diversity Incubators will create new businesses via investment of grant funding and other funding generated to startups in communities in the State of Maryland. Please vote in favor of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Pauline W Tiako / 2/26/24 / #7
Print Name/Date/District#

Pauline W Tiako
Signature

Letter of Support SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: Pauline Tiako

Position: FAV

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

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Sincerely,

Pauline W Tiako / 2/26/24 / #7
Print Name/Date/District#

Pauline W Tiako

Signature

Diversity Incubator Bill SB0765.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Daniels

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

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Sincerely,

PETER DANIELS 2-26-24 DIST. 46
Print Name/Date/District#


Signature

Sample Letter of Support SB765.pdf

Uploaded by: robert m. bell

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family members, I respectfully request your support of SB0765, The Business Diversity Incubator Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities. This historic legislation will be utilized to make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and up to date with modern enterprise standards and protocols.

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Sincerely,

Print Name/Date/District#

Signature

noreply@dllr.state.md.us_20240226_144959 Signed.pdf

Uploaded by: Timothy Smith

Position: FAV

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Vice-Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON HB1490 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

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Sincerely,

Timothy Smith 2/26/24
Print Name/Date/District# District # 7

Timothy R. Smith R
Signature

SB765 GreenPage Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Tre Hayes

Position: FAV

February 27, 2024

Honorable members of the Finance committee and Chair Senator Griffith,

My name is Deontre Hayes, and I am here today to lend my support to Senate Bill 765. This bill, proposed by Senator Hayes, seeks to establish the Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund within the Department of Commerce. It aims to provide grants to certain business entities to establish business incubators, thereby fostering a more diverse and equitable tech landscape in Maryland.

As the founder of GreenPage LLC, a platform dedicated to promoting Black-owned businesses, I understand firsthand the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, especially those from underrepresented communities. While my company is in its fledgling state, the support outlined in SB765, particularly through the Business Diversity Program, could greatly accelerate our growth and impact.

The need for initiatives like SB765 is underscored by the sobering statistics from Crunchbase. According to their latest data, Black founders in the U.S. received only 0.48% of all venture dollars allocated last year, amounting to approximately \$661 million out of \$136 billion. This marks the lowest percentage in recent history and highlights a disturbing trend of declining support for Black-owned businesses. Furthermore, the data reveals a significant drop in funding for Black entrepreneurs throughout the year, with funding plummeting to 0.13% in Q3'23 before slightly recovering to 0.20% in Q4'23.

This downward trend in funding is alarming and underscores the urgent need for targeted intervention to address systemic barriers faced by Black entrepreneurs. SB765 represents a critical step towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable tech ecosystem in Maryland.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 765 and take decisive action to address the disparities faced by Black entrepreneurs in our state. Together, we can create opportunities for all aspiring entrepreneurs to thrive and contribute to our economy.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.



Deontre Hayes
GreenPage LLC, Founder & CEO

Holmes.W. - SB0765 Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: William Holmes

Position: FAV

SB0765

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Katherine A Klausmeier
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VOTE YES ON SB0765 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS DIVERSITY
INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

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Sincerely,

William Holmes 2.26.24 #45

Print Name/Date/District#

William B. Holmes III

Signature

UNF SB0765 Business Diversity Fund vmcavoy.pdf

Uploaded by: vince mcavoy

Position: UNF

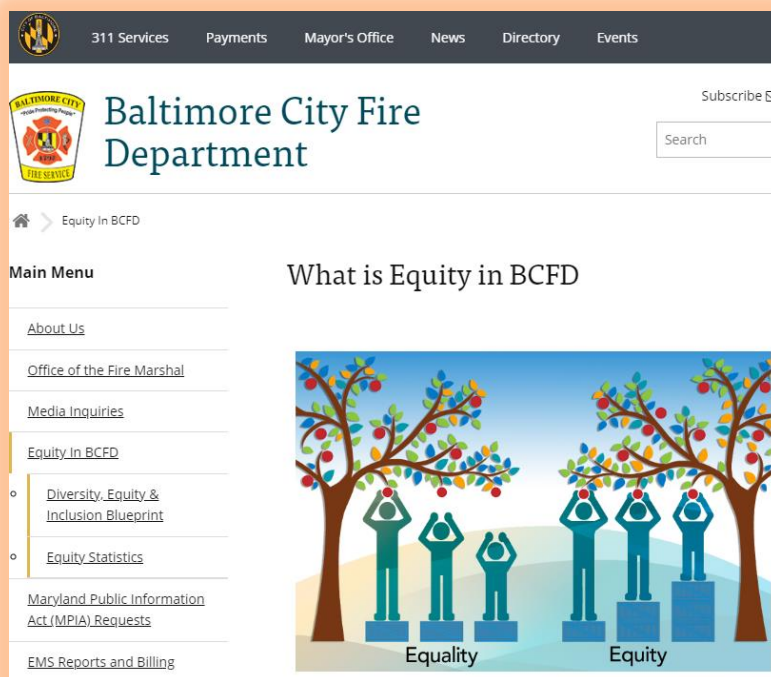
UNFAVORABLE on SB0765

Senator Hayes

Economic Development - Business Diversity Incubator Program and Fund – Established

Members of Senate Finance~

Choosing winners is not just wrongful, pitting those who clearly cannot compete on a meaningful level without the infusing of artificial propping, such as seen in the Baltimore City Fire Department's own website.



Pushing for certain races & classes to lose so that others less capable can takeover (let's not call it "succeed"...succeed implies an actual success, not just artificial promotion of a group as by a government-funded coup) is illegal.

I urge this bill to be re-drafted so that actual success can be (re-)inculcated into Maryland's economy.

Claudine Gay's DEI Empire

Harvard's embattled president quietly built "diversity" ideology into every facet of campus life.



[CHRISTOPHER E. RUFO](#)

DEC 19, 2023

While affirmative action has been a longstanding practice at Harvard, other programs led by Gay were new. Following the death of George Floyd in 2020, Gay commissioned a Task Force on Visual Culture and Signage, which released a series of [recommendations](#) the following year for engaging in the "historical reckoning with racial injustice." The recommendations included a mandate to change "spaces whose visual culture is dominated by homogenous portraiture of white men." In particular, the report maintained, administrators should "refresh" the walls of Annenberg Hall, which "prominently display a series of 23 portraits, none of [which] depict women, and all but three of [which] depict white men." Who were these white men and why were they honored in the first place? The report does not say—their race and sex alone provided sufficient justification for their banishment.

In 2022, Gay implemented an initiative at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for "denaming" any "space, program, or other entity" deemed racist by the faculty and administration. According to the [report](#), commissioned by then-president Lawrence Bacow, these decisions would be "based on the perception that a namesake's actions or beliefs were 'abhorrent' in the context of current values." In other words, Harvard would use the standards of present-day social-justice activism to pass judgment on men who lived hundreds of years prior—at best, an ahistorical and deeply ambiguous method. As part of this project, Gay sent an email to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences community soliciting "requests for

denaming,” promising to address the situation “through the lens of reckoning.” Since then, the university has [grappled](#) with denaming multiple buildings, including Winthrop House, named after John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and his great grandson, also John Winthrop, a Harvard professor and president.

As president, Gay leads a sprawling DEI bureaucracy—officially, the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging—that seeks to influence how students speak, think, and behave in relation to race. Though the university deleted nearly all DEI materials from its website following President Gay’s disastrous congressional testimony related to the Hamas terror attack, I have recovered some of these documents through an Internet archive. Harvard’s DEI administrators [encourage](#) students to internalize the basic narrative of critical race theory: America is a nation defined by “systemic racism,” “police brutality,” “White supremacist violence,” and the “weaponization of whiteness.” In another [resource](#), students were invited to “unpack” their “White privilege” and “male privilege,” and to consider their “White fragility,” which stems from “the privilege that accrues to White people living in a society that protects and insulates them from race-based stress.”

What is one to make of Gay’s record as a whole? She is hardly a “[scholar’s scholar](#),” as the university magazine tried to portray her, having published, according to her curriculum vitae, just 11 academic papers—nearly half

Read the balance of the article here.....

<https://christopherrufo.com/p/claudine-gays-dei-empire>