



POSITION STATEMENT

Testimony to the Judicial Proceedings Committee

Senate Bill 0470 – Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS) Act

Sponsors: Senate President Bill Ferguson

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GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill SB0470, which creates the Public Safety Apprenticeship Program, requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop model mental health and wellness policies for law enforcement agencies, and establishes the Workgroup on Growing Engagement in the Law Enforcement Workforce.

There is a national crisis when it comes to recruiting and retaining qualified police officers. Fewer people want to be police officers, more police officers are becoming eligible for retirement than ever before, and those becoming police officers are not staying long-term. This is increasingly evident with the Baltimore Police Department, which has experienced a net loss of one hundred officers each year over the past 4 years and is currently 550 officers short of budgeted numbers.

National research on police recruitment and retention collected by agencies such as the Police Executive Research Forum and the Department of Justice support police apprenticeship programs and mental health/wellness programs as effective strategies to both recruit and retain police officers. Furthermore, the creation of this workgroup is in alignment with one of the GBC's core public safety focus areas. As part of its multi-year agenda the GBC is utilizing the diverse human resources and talent acquisition leadership of its partners to help develop recruitment and retention strategies for the Baltimore Police Department. For these reasons, the GBC supports not just the passing of the bill but will also be an active partner in supporting the work of the Workgroup. Thank you.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is the leading voice for the private sector in the Baltimore region, providing insightful economic and civic leadership to drive collective impact. Composed of more than 400 organizations, including large, mid-size, and small companies, nonprofits, foundations, and educational and healthcare institutions, the GBC is dedicated to fostering the prosperity of the Greater Baltimore region.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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